Commentary

VOLUME EIGHTY-SIX • NUMBER ONE • JULY 1988

Glasnost & Its Limits
Walter Laqueur

Munich at Fifty
Williamson Murray

The ANC in Its Own Words
David Roberts, Jr.

Will Herberg in Retrospect
David G. Dalin

School Days—A Story
Rachel Abrams

Feminism vs. Literature
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Remembering Sam Spiegel
Daniel Fuchs

Books in Review
James Q. Wilson/Herbert Stein/
Carter Cooper/William H. Youngren/Wilfred M. McClay

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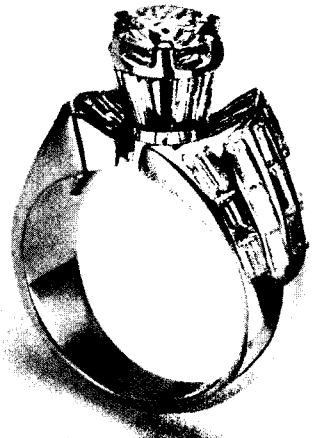

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Letters from Readers

Can Israel Withdraw?

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The articles by Mitchell Bard and David Bar-Illan debating a unilateral withdrawal by Israel ["Can Israel Withdraw?," April] are very instructive. Mr. Bard's "yes" is reasonable and optimistic, while Mr. Bar-Illan's "no" is dour and pessimistic. However, it is Mr. Bard's article that is thoroughly depressing.

Mr. Bard is not hostile to Israel, like so many who wish to "save Israel in spite of herself." On the contrary, he understands Israel's unique geography and enumerates all of Israel's apprehensions as well as its legal, historical, religious, strategic, and moral claims to Judea, Samaria, and Gaza. Like many of Israel's supporters, however, he has grown weary of the conflict and he wants Israel to "do something." The "something" he presents as his argument is nothing more than a recycled version of the old, shopworn, Rogers Plan, dusted off, adjusted a bit, and delivered as an upbeat do-it-yourself peace kit. The Rogers Plan, and all its clones proffered by pundits, "peaceniks," statesmen, think-tankers, and analysts, over and over again, is based on a delusion of Arab stability and moderation. As such, it is a prescription for suicide. Mr. Bar-Illan chooses life, albeit a harsh, painful, and compromised life.

In the last paragraph of Mr. Bard's article he states that there is comfort to be had in the fact that Israelis are free to ignore what he suggests. I suspect, although I cannot prove it, that Mr. Bard hopes, as all of Israel's real friends do, that the Israelis will listen to Mr. Bar-Illan.

RUTH S. KING
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In propounding the virtues of an Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza, Mitchell Bard discounts the dangers to Israel's existence . . . of a Palestinian state west of the Jordan River. Even if extreme Palestinian irredentist elements were to gain control of such a state, he writes, "it need not be considered an unmanageable threat to Israeli security." Mr. Bard is correct in his assessment that a Palestinian state *per se* would not be sufficiently strong to endanger Israel's security. But the flaws in his argument are exposed when he ignores the dangers posed to Israel by the potentially fatal combination of a Palestinian state plus a Pan-Arab coalition in case of war.

Israel was attacked by varied coalitions of Arab states in 1948, 1967, and 1973. Currently, the worst-case scenario envisaged by the Israeli general staff consists of an attack by the combined forces of Syria, Jordan, and Iran with over 20 divisions comprised of 4,500 tanks and 230,000 men. Faced with such an attack, Israel would have no chance of successfully defending itself without prior possession of the West Bank. The Judean and Samarian mountains which run through the West Bank provide tremendous tactical-defensive advantages against any attack from the east. This is doubly important in the case of a nation like Israel which has only a small standing army and relies on reserve formations for most of its military strength.

In the event of such a war, the Palestinians would not be strong enough to prevent the movement of the Israel Defense Forces [IDF] into defensive positions in the West Bank, but they would certainly engage in hit-and-run attacks and delaying tactics designed to impede the Israeli advance as much as possible. I would advise Mr. Bard to refresh his memory about the Syrian invasion of Lebanon in 1976. In mountainous terrain markedly similar to that of the West Bank, PLO fighters armed with RPG bazookas were able to delay an entire Syrian armored division for three full days. For Israel, in the event of a large-scale Arab attack, a delay of even a few hours could be fatal.

The military significance of the West Bank is clear from any perusal of a topographical map of the area. The average distance from the present Israeli frontier along the Jordan River to the Mediterranean is only 45 miles. Mr. Bard fails to understand that the "secure and defensible borders" he supports and territorial withdrawal are contradictions in terms.

Mr. Bard's assumption that Israel's survival for nineteen years within its pre-1967 borders proves that the West Bank is not vital for Israel's defense is inherently flawed. He cites the victory in the 1967 war

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as proof of Israel's ability to defend itself from within truncated borders. Evidently, Mr. Bard is not sufficiently acquainted with the history of the Six-Day War. To a large extent, Israel owes its survival to the equivocation demonstrated by Jordan's King Hussein during the initial stages of the war. When fighting erupted on June 5, almost the entire strength of the IDF was employed on the Egyptian and Syrian fronts. The Israeli general staff had gambled that Jordan would not enter the war. A single armored brigade equipped with 50 or so obsolescent, World War II vintage Sherman tanks was deployed in defensive positions along the narrow, vulnerable border between the West Bank and the Mediterranean. The Jordanian forces stationed in the West Bank, however, were equipped with over 100 modern Patton tanks. Had King Hussein ordered his forces to launch a decisive attack, the thinly spread Israelis would have stood little chance of stopping them. The resulting bisection of Israel would probably have been the first act in the tragedy of its destruction.

Fortunately, the Jordanian monarch exhibited marked qualities of irresolution and indecisiveness. He limited Jordan's initial participation in the war to artillery and air bombardments. The IDF utilized the time given them to transfer several additional brigades from other fronts to the West Bank. This transfer of forces was the true key to the Israeli victory over Jordan and Syria in the 1967 war: rapid movement to attain local superiority. Its prerequisite was an outstanding display of incompetence by King Hussein as a military commander. Does Mr. Bard realize that what he is proposing is a situation where Israel's survival will depend on similar displays of incompetence by any further enemies?

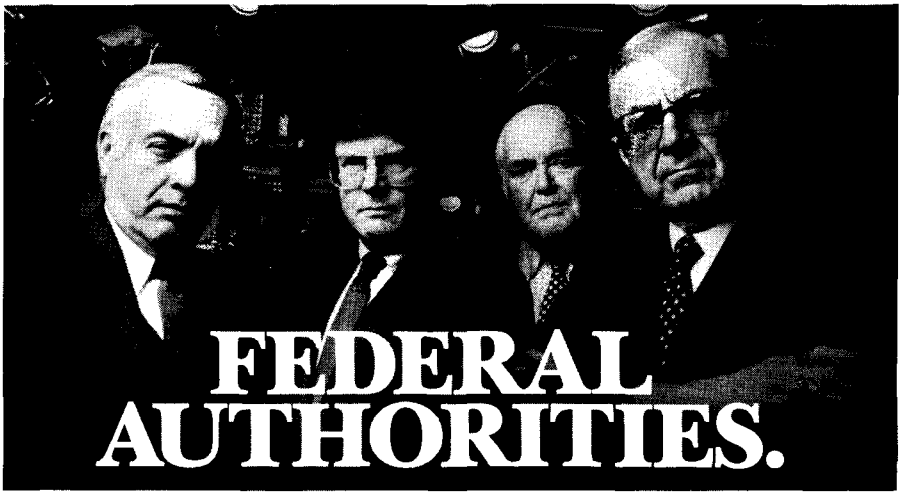
[Captain] THEODORE LAPKIN
[IDF, Reserves]
Haifa, Israel

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The ongoing violence in Judea, Samaria, and Gaza is disturbing, ... but far more disturbing are some of the naive assumptions one has been hearing of late, Mitchell Bard's among them. A careful examination of a map of the Middle East—something far too many fail to undertake before prescribing their cures for the region's ills—clearly reveals the reason for Israel's intense security concerns: Israel has no defensive depth. For a nation with virtually its entire army made up of civilian reserves (which can require up to forty-eight hours to be called up) to give up an area in such close proximity to its population centers is tantamount to suicide. "Secure, defensible borders" also means obtaining assurances that there would be enough time to mobilize those reserves before Israeli cities were overrun. At the very least, continued occupation of the Jordan River valley is a must to prevent the infiltration of fighters and weapons from the East Bank. Unimpeded, Jordanian tanks are only hours from Israel's capital. Israel simply cannot afford to gamble its survival on the chance that the Arabs will suddenly accept Israel's right to exist.

Even more disturbing is Mr. Bard's statement that, "At worst, Israel would have to retake the territories by force." While I accept the sincerity of Mr. Bard's concern for Israel's well-being, all too often those who justify demands for unilateral Israeli concessions on these grounds do not care how many more Jews would die in the process. Mr. Bard also presumes that the United States can always be counted on to provide Israel with any support necessary.... But it would take only one administration hostile to Israel to withhold aid at a critical juncture, costing the lives of thousands of Jews, if not the very existence of Israel. Israel must be able to defend itself against its foes.

I do not advocate nonaction, but calls for unilateral Israeli withdrawal from Judea and Samaria are misplaced. Saul Cohen's *The Geopolitics of Israel's Border Question*, which was published by Tel Aviv's Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies, is one proposal toward the kind of territorial compromise that might be possible. A period of Palestinian autonomy, perhaps in confederation with Jordan, would give the Palestinians a chance to demonstrate their willingness to coexist peacefully with Israel. But the decision as to actual steps that should be taken is best left to those who will have to live with them on a day-to-day basis, and the Palestin-



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ian Arabs have yet to prove their readiness for such an arrangement....

JOHN BLOW
Grawn, Michigan

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Whether Mitchell Bard or David Bar-Illan is right about the consequences of an Israeli withdrawal from the territories may be subject to experimental verification. The geographic separation of Gaza from the West Bank permits a test, with Gaza serving as the laboratory. Whatever forces are acting among the Palestinians would play themselves out in a Gazan mini-state.

Israel should retain a corridor about two miles wide at the southern end of Gaza to cut it off from Egypt. The resulting area would be completely indefensible by virtue of its size and topography, and thus easy to reoccupy if that became necessary. Its economy, at least initially, would become dependent on cooperation with Israel. Both of these factors would provide whatever government came into power with ample reason to be cautious.

Because Israel would act unilaterally, it would not be possible to impose any conditions on the new entity. Nevertheless, it could be made very clear that certain actions would lead to reoccupation: introduction of foreign troops, missiles, or other heavy weapons; granting of basing rights to foreign forces; and support for guerrilla attacks into Israel. Civil warfare, as in Lebanon, would be a domestic affair, as long as it did not spill over into Israel.

If the experiment were a success, and a credible government with which Israel could feel comfortable were firmly established, a similar unilateral Israeli withdrawal on the West Bank could be contemplated. The government in Gaza, which would be a known quantity by then, would have some substantial advantages in competing for control of the West Bank. First, it would have the prestige of being an established government, the regime whose policies finally succeeded in achieving both Israeli withdrawal and Palestinian statehood. Second, as an established government, it would have greater organizational, financial, and personnel resources than any competing movement(s). Major changes in orientation would be difficult because precedents would have been set, standard procedures put into place, and expectations about the future brought into some relationship with reality.

Descent into chaos, however, would demonstrate that Palestinian self-rule is not a viable option. Since King Hussein does not want any more Palestinians in his kingdom, and demographics preclude incorporating them into Israel, that would lead to continued occupation as the only viable alternative. The failure of such an experiment might thus reveal that occupation is the best solution available at this time.

YALE M. ZUSSMAN
North Quincy, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Mitchell Bard states that in withdrawing unilaterally from the occupied territories, Israel could establish boundaries that would protect as many settlers as possible. But on the basis of past experience, and given the radical influences pervading the Arab world, what in the world makes him believe this would satisfy the Palestinians? To them every inch of Judea and Samaria . . . is theirs and theirs alone. Mr. Bard's plan would require the same number of Israeli forces to defend the area as are required now to police it. . . .

Until such time as the Palestinians show a desire to live in peace with the people of Israel, no plan or solution will be worth attempting. . . .

ABE BRESLAUER
Bay Harbor Islands, Florida

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I am neither Arab nor Jew and definitely not an "expert" on Middle East affairs. But I read quite a bit and understand a goodly portion of what I read.

As between Mitchell Bard's "yes" and David Bar-Illan's "no," there is no real contest. Mitchell Bard's style is the style of the ivory-tower expert. . . . I'll put my nickel on David Bar-Illan's "no." To my plebeian ear, he sounds much closer to the grass roots.

TOM HUMBLE
Lockeport, Nova Scotia
Canada

MITCHELL BARD writes:

As I expected, my critics are vigorous in their defense of Israel's security, but seem unaware of the fact that their views contradict the position successive Israeli governments have held for more than two decades. That position, expressed in government statements and publications, is that Israel must have "secure and defensible borders." Moreover, by endorsing UN Resolution 242, Israel accepted the principle of territorial withdrawal. Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir has recently suggested that 242 does not apply to Judea and Samaria, but this interpretation contradicts the understanding of all the parties, including Israel. Thus, Theodore Lapkin's view that "secure and defensible borders" and withdrawal are a contradiction in terms is not shared by the Israeli government.

The principal criticism is that I discount Israel's security needs. I do not; rather, I rely on the authority of Israel's top defense officials, including the current defense minister who is on record as saying that Israel can withdraw from 60 percent of Judea and Samaria. A committee calling for territorial withdrawal was recently formed in Israel that includes 11 ex-generals and senior officers, including former chief of Military Intelligence, Aharon Yariv; former Air Force commander, Motti Hod; and former Mossad chief, Yitzhak Hofi. "I, like others, am anxious about a Palestinian state," Yariv has said, "but I believe we can deal with it. If the area is demilitarized, or if there is only a token force for ceremonial purposes—who should be afraid of whom? People say, 'They don't only want Nablus, they want Jaffa and Haifa, too.' But they've wanted all that for forty years now. We didn't give [Jaffa or Haifa] to them then, and we won't in the future." Exactly.

In Mr. Lapkin's enthusiasm to teach me a history lesson about the 1967 war, he neglects the most salient fact: Israel was prepared to give up most of the territories after the war. A more valid concern is the potential of a Pan-Arab coalition attacking Israel; however, Mr. Lapkin makes no case as to why possession of the West Bank would be an effective deterrent to such a possibility. It did not prevent Syria and Egypt from attacking in 1973. Did it deter Jordan? No. Hussein was deterred by what happened to him in 1967.

There is little incentive now for Hussein to join any coalition and there would be even less if a Pal-

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estinian state were to exist. In that case, he would be more interested in absorbing the West Bank than in challenging Israel. Mr. Lapkin is correct in saying that the Palestinians would not be able to prevent the IDF from moving into defensive positions. They might well engage in "hit-and-run attacks and delaying tactics," but it is doubtful they could be very effective. In addition, if they know that they cannot prevent the IDF from retaking the area, what incentive do they have to join a coalition where they will suffer the brunt of the losses? Apparently, I have more faith in the IDF than do some of Israel's most vigorous supporters.

Mr. Lapkin suggests that Jordan could easily have bisected Israel in what "would probably have been the first act in the tragedy of [Israel's] destruction." In 1967 Israel warned Hussein to stay out of the fighting; therefore, to say that Israel was unprepared for his assault is misleading. Could Hussein have made the war more difficult for Israel if he were not an "incompetent"? Perhaps, but Mr. Lapkin is in a decided minority in questioning Israel's ability to defeat the Arabs in 1967. Most American officials did not have much doubt about the outcome.

John Blow raises the issue of "defensive depth," but there is a serious question as to the relevance of this concept in the age of missile warfare when Israel's enemies can leapfrog the West Bank. In any case, I am willing to accept the word of Israel's defense ministers who have consistently said that Israel can withdraw.

The U.S. cannot always be counted on to assist Israel, as was evident in Israel's first three wars. The situation has changed dramatically, however, as U.S.-Israel relations have evolved from friendship to a de-facto alliance. The U.S. *can* be counted on to deter the Soviets.

Mr. Blow suggests that a hostile administration could take actions that would threaten Israel. True, but if a U.S. administration is hostile, the least of Israel's worries would be the West Bank. A fundamental change in U.S.-Israel relations would have a catastrophic impact on Israeli security, but I see no reason to expect such a reversal in U.S. policy. Moreover, I believe Congress will continue to constrain the White House's freedom to take actions detrimental to Israel.

Mr. Blow and others consider only the worst-case scenario if a Palestinian state were to be created, but what about the worst-case scenario of his (and Israel's and the U.S.'s) preferred solution: a Palestinian-Jordanian confederation? In this scenario, the PLO overthrows Hussein. Then the "Jordan is Palestine" proponents would finally have their way and Israel would face a PLO state encompassing both the East *and* West Banks. This, I submit, would be far more threatening than a West Bank state wedged between Jordan's Arab Legion and the IDF.

Yale M. Zussman's suggestion that Gaza be used as a laboratory is appealing because it offers a means of moving the process along and is a logical way to proceed in what would necessarily be a multistage process. Gaza would certainly be easier to deal with than the West Bank since there would not be the same problems of drawing boundaries, uprooting settlers, or devising early-warning defenses. The problem is that it is only a half-measure and would not solve the Israeli problem. All of the debilitating effects of occupation on Israelis would still result from the administration of Judea and Samaria. In addition, giving Gazans freedom would be likely to stimulate greater unrest among impatient Palestinians on the West Bank who would remain skeptical that Israel ever planned to withdraw (unless there was a fixed timetable). Mr. Zussman leaves this open-ended by saying the experiment's success would come only after Israel felt comfortable with the Gaza government. Palestinians would probably see the Gaza action as a substitute rather than as a prelude to withdrawal from the West Bank.

Contrary to Ruth S. King's belief, I have not "grown weary of the conflict." I believe the Arab-Israeli, Jewish-Islamic conflict will last so long as a Jewish state exists. What I am weary of is the limited thinking of some of the observers of the Middle East scene, and I find it depressing that none of the writers expresses any concern for the Israeli problem.

For more than twenty years there has been a stalemate because of the position represented by Mr. Blow and others; that is, the Arabs must demonstrate they are ready to live in peace before there can be any change in the status quo, but the Arabs have no such inclination. This reveals another of the contradictions in Israeli policy. Israelis say that they are ready to make concessions if the Arabs will negotiate, but they insist that the Arabs will never negotiate. I agree. It is unlikely, though possible, that another Sadat will emerge. He was unique, both as an individual and because he was Egyptian. It would be far more difficult for another Arab leader to act as boldly, especially after seeing the violent end Sadat met as a consequence. Israel cannot allow itself to remain paralyzed by Arab intransigence.

I find Mr. Blow's suggestion that I do not care how many Jews would die in an effort to reconquer the West Bank slanderous. The death of even one Israeli is too many. I also object to Ruth S. King's suggestion that I am not a "real" friend of Israel because she disagrees with me. It is unfortunate that disputants in a common cause should be seen in such Manichean terms.

I agree with Mr. Blow that the decision is best left to those who live in Israel, which is what I said at the conclusion of my article. I disagree, however, with Tom Humble's suggestion that David Bar-Illan's proximity to the conflict necessarily makes his argument more persuasive. There are advantages to being close to the situation, but there are also benefits in distance, which sometimes confers a degree of objectivity.

Mrs. King says David Bar-Illan chooses life while I recommend suicide, but I believe that, in any case, she has it backward. My analysis is not based on "a delusion of Arab stability and moderation," or on a belief, as Abe Breslauer suggests, that the Palestinians would be satisfied after Israel's withdrawal. I stated explicitly that I have no such delusions. My position is based on the need to solve the Israeli problem and my confidence in the IDF's ability to continue to defend the country against Arab threats as it has for the last forty years.

The real choice is between the *potential* threat to Israel's existence posed by *external* forces after unilateral withdrawal and the *certain* destruction of the Zionist dream by *internal* forces. Much as they, like me, want to avoid it, my fear is that

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the course implicitly urged by Messrs. Blow and Lapkin, and by Mrs. King, will help lead to the latter result.

DAVID BAR-ILLAN writes:

Yale M. Zussman's proposal for an independent Arab ministate in Gaza deserves consideration. Unlike Judea and Samaria, Gaza is not situated on a mountain ridge dominating Israel's major population centers. It constitutes less than 10 percent of the "territories," yet it contains almost half of their Arab inhabitants. Relinquishing it would not only resolve half the demographic problem but rid Israel of a hotbed of terrorism and Islamic fanaticism.

However, one of Mr. Zussman's stipulations points to the danger inherent in this "experiment." Referring to the predictable Arab fragmentation after Israel's withdrawal, he says, "Civil warfare, as in Lebanon, would be a domestic affair, as long as it did not spill over into Israel." But, as the Lebanon experience has shown, such spillovers are inevitable. The bloodletting in Lebanon between Amal Shiites supported by Syria and Hizbullah Shiites supported by Syria's ally Iran, and the constant battles among PLO groups, would have been merely tragic, savage sideshows had they remained a "domestic affair." Instead, they are invariably accompanied by terrorist forays into Israel, increased Syrian involvement, and Israeli preemptive incursions into Lebanon. To add another such front less than 40 miles from Tel Aviv may be too high a price for ridding Israel of the Gaza scourge. Nor is it quite that "easy to reoccupy" a mostly urban area containing a population of 700,000—by then thoroughly infested with armed Islamic fundamentalists and PLO gunmen—without heavy Israeli casualties.

Mr. Zussman is right, of course, in stating that Gaza's size and topography and economic dependence on Israel "would provide whatever government came into power with ample reason to be cautious." But reason has little to do with the Arab war against Israel. The most startling—and least publicized—aspect of the Arab "uprising" has been the outpouring of Arab anti-Semitism, of a bloodthirstiness and medieval ferocity that surpass even the push-the-Jews-into-the-sea slogans of the Nasser era. Arab poets extolled by Israel's "peace camp" as paragons of moderation and potential partners in peace (of whom Mahmoud Darwish, the PLO "culture minister" and regular participant in dialogues with Israeli superdoves, is the best known but by no means the only one) have published works calling for the disappearance not only of Israel and its Jewish inhabitants, but of whatever may serve as a reminder of their presence in the land, including their graves.

The establishment press in such "moderate" countries as Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, the Emirates, and Saudi Arabia publishes stories of settlers kidnapping Arab children and using their blood for Passover *matzot*, and prints articles and sermons by religious leaders advocating the complete liquidation of Israel and the killing of "all those eaters of human flesh, wild animals, infidels, murderers, pigs, and dogs . . . those cursed people, the Jews."

Such manifestations go a long way toward shattering illusions. But recognizing illusions for what they are is not "pessimistic," as Ruth S. King characterizes my argument; it is a necessary condition for thinking clearly about alternatives, which is what I attempted to do in my article.

Arms Control

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Patrick Glynn, in his excellent article, "Reagan's Rush to Disarm" [March], mentions the Soviet Union's rejection of President Carter's deep-cuts proposal of Intermediate Nuclear Force (INF) weapons in March 1977, but neglects to mention the origin of President Carter's proposal. . . . The source of the problem was Leonid Brezhnev's movement of intermediate SS-20s into Eastern Europe in the mid-1970's.

As a defense against the SS-20s, English Prime Minister James Callaghan, West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, and French President Giscard d'Estaing, meeting in Guadalupe in 1979, implored President Carter to send them Pershing and cruise missiles as intermediate-range weapons. The request was repeated after Reagan's election by the newly-elected heads of state Margaret Thatcher, Helmut Kohl, and François Mitterrand. Before sending the missiles, Reagan made every possible attempt to have the Soviet leadership withdraw the SS-20s....

The INF agreement has satisfied the original request of the mid-70's to have the SS-20s withdrawn. It is therefore a clear-cut victory for President Reagan.

EDWARD C. MICHAUD
Weston, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Patrick Glynn mentions "powerful psychological forces that produce myopia and strategic incomprehension." That statement is entirely too kind . . . to those . . . who use the media to indoctrinate the naive and uninformed with . . . political propaganda.

Helen Caldicott of Physicians for Social Responsibility, for example, has appeared on numerous TV and radio talk shows . . . predicting that if Ronald Reagan were elected or reelected, nuclear war would be inevitable. Unless it has escaped my attention, no such event has taken place.

Carl Sagan and the Union of Concerned Scientists [UCS] have supported arms-control proposals made by Brezhnev, Andropov, Chernenko, and Gorbachev. But not once to my knowledge during the five years that the Soviets were deploying their SS-20s did Sagan appear on any TV or radio program to denounce this escalation. When, after saying no for five years, the Soviets walked out of the negotiations, the UCS blamed Reagan for being intransigent. What seems to bother Sagan are the 200 single-warhead missiles pointed at the Soviet Union, but not the 650 to 950 multiple-warhead missiles pointed at the U.S. and NATO. . . .

Samuel T. Cohen, inventor of the neutron bomb, has suggested that the SS-20 may very well be a mobile ICBM. Like ground-launched cruise missiles, SS-20s can easily be concealed, especially in the vast expanse not covered by intrusive inspection under the verification regime of the INF treaty. The distance at which the SS-20 was tested was only 10 percent shy of the ICBM range. In addition, the telemetry was encrypted, the reason being that there is more to the SS-20 than the Soviets wish us to know.

Under the INF treaty, the Soviets are required to dismantle 650 SS-20s. According to current National Intelligence Estimates

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(NIEs), the Soviets possess at least 950 and possibly 1,200 SS-20s. Is there any way to prove their non-existence under the criteria for verification? Why does Congress pass a law that binds Reagan to those portions of SALT II not yet violated by the Soviets? What purpose does it serve to ignore the fact that the Soviets have been violating the Helsinki accords . . . ever since they were signed? Presidents Ford, Carter, and Reagan, as well as the State Department and the Senate, should come under ridicule for keeping this agreement in force. . . .

CHARLES M. ALEMAN
River Ridge, Louisiana

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . In the wake of the INF treaty there has been more attention than usual directed at the military balance between East and West. Some Senators have criticized the administration on grounds that it should have tied the INF treaty to negotiations to cut conventional arms as well as intermediate nuclear missiles. Yet fourteen years of negotiations at the Mutual Balanced Force Reduction (MBFR) talks have not produced a shred of accomplishment, due at least in part to Soviet deceptive measures. . . . So hopes that we can cut conventional forces are dubious.

A major assumption of supporters of the INF treaty is that NATO has sufficient nuclear firepower left over to deter Soviet aggression. Indeed, Boston *Globe* defense expert Fred Kaplan has stated baldly that the deployment of intermediate-range missiles was purely political, and had no military relevance. This assumption is disproved, however, by Christoph Bertram, diplomatic correspondent of the West German magazine *Die Zeit*. Writing in the Summer 1987 issue of *Foreign Affairs*, he looks at the nuclear firepower of NATO, and finds it to be fatally flawed. Bertram makes a number of points: NATO has 400 strategic submarine-launched missiles assigned to the Supreme Allied Commander, Europe (SACEUR), yet these are unlikely to be fired in response to Soviet conventional aggression confined to Europe; shipboard cruise missiles are not assigned to NATO and are unlikely to be; in case of war the Soviets can preempt nuclear air attacks by forcing NATO planes to switch over to conventional missions; the presence of some 4,600 tactical nuclear weapons in NATO's arsenal presupposes the least likely of military uses—early on in a war and on friendly territory; finally, the 120 missiles of Britain and France are insufficient to extend deterrence to NATO's non-nuclear members. . . .

There has been considerable debate over whether the Soviets really would want to attack Western Europe. . . . Some have argued that such an invasion would not be worth the price to the Soviets—citing occupation problems in West Germany, the disruption of trade with the West, etc. Others have even recommended building NATO strategy around a concept of "defensive defense," whereby large numbers of civilian reservists armed with anti-aircraft and anti-tank weapons would use a mix of anti-tank defense, civil disobedience, passive resistance, and guerrilla warfare to defeat an invader. . . . But this strategy presents many problems: it leaves the West vulnerable to blackmail; it assumes that any occupation of West Germany and other European countries would turn out the way Afghanistan did (debatable, since, unlike Afghanistan, the terrain of Europe works against the guerrillas and in favor of occupation armies); it would leave Europeans at the mercy of Warsaw Pact troops, to be killed in large numbers by these troops; it assumes there would be outside aid to resistance forces (also debatable, since in Europe the Soviets would no doubt threaten the use of nuclear weapons to deter outside countries from aiding resistance forces). . . .

There is a further danger to the present situation. Continued problems in Eastern Europe and recent fighting in Soviet Armenia have undoubtedly caused Kremlin leaders to be concerned that they are losing their grip on their empire. If so, this could bring about a kind of psychology of desperation which develops into a determination to risk all. Given this fluid situation, which could become very ugly in the near future, it is not smart to enter into disarmament talks that we may regret . . . in years to come.

MICHAEL DALY
Wakefield, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I like COMMENTARY very much, . . . so I was saddened to see a deliberate misstatement on the cover of the March issue. . . . "Reagan's Rush to Disarm" just isn't so. The article by Patrick Glynn is about a treaty and not about Reagan's rush to disarm.

Is this blatant misinformation a form of vituperation and hatred or a careless disregard of facts to make a point and/or discredit the President? Your reputation is too good for you to do this.

RONALD BROWN
Key Biscayne, Florida

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Patrick Glynn is on target when he writes about blind faith in "the arms-control process itself," in which the sheep pass resolutions in favor of vegetarianism but the wolves pay no heed.

The 20th century has been unkind to liberal democracies which tried to defend themselves with pieces of paper instead of cold steel. Even today, in Ethiopia, it is the men holding the AK-47 rifles in their hands who control the dribble of food to the starving thousands.

ROBERT P. FAIRCHILD
Fort Knox, Kentucky

PATRICK GLYNN writes:

While I appreciate Edward C. Michaud's compliment, I am puzzled by his assertion that I fail to mention the SS-20, since mention of the SS-20's role is plainly made on page 26 of my article. Also, as a factual matter, President Carter's March 1977 "deep-cuts" proposal covered not intermediate-range missiles but rather strategic arms. The Western INF proposal was not advanced until December 1979. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the rationale for NATO's INF deployment was not singular but twofold: to counter the Soviet SS-20 and also to restore the credibility of NATO's strategy of "flexible response." As West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt and others began suggesting in 1977, the credibility of NATO's strategy of threatening to use nuclear weapons against an attack by superior Soviet conventional forces had inadvertently been undercut by SALT I, which appeared to end the era of U.S. nuclear superiority by codifying a condition of strategic parity between the superpowers.

While it is true that the INF agreement addresses the first issue, the SS-20, the broader problem—the diminished credibility of NATO's deterrent strategy—has ac-

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tually been aggravated by the treaty. Not only does the agreement eliminate the weapons seemingly most suited, in the present strategic environment, to the flexible-response mission (an issue touched on by Michael Daly), but the treaty and the anti-nuclear rhetoric used to promote it have further undermined European public support for NATO's nuclear posture. That is one reason, among several, why the INF agreement is far from being the smashing success the Reagan administration makes it out to be.

Apart from the other issues raised in Charles M. Aleman's letter, he should be aware that the SS-20's mobility is not a subject of speculation but instead a matter of public record.

I must say, finally, that Ronald Brown's odd complaint about the article's title makes no sense to me. In my opinion, the title conveys very accurately not only the substance of the article but also, unfortunately, the tenor and spirit of the Reagan administration's approach to arms control these past several months.

Welfare Reform

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I am in the process of writing a book tentatively entitled *Charles Murray and His Critics*, in which the critics come out decidedly on the short end. To my disappointment, it looks as though I may have to include in my survey an article published by my favorite magazine. I should say, first, that Lawrence M. Mead's article, "The New Welfare Debate" [March] contains a substantial amount of good sense. Unfortunately, its treatment of Charles Murray leaves a lot to be desired.

According to Mr. Mead, Murray thinks that "Government should . . . abolish welfare for the working-aged. . . ." In the next paragraph he says that "abolishing welfare" is what "Murray wants." Then, in what seems to be at least partial reference to Murray, he says that "conservatives . . . have to get over their hereditary suspicion of government." In fact, Part I of Murray's book *Losing Ground* begins with the following words: "Our topic is the poor and discriminated-against as they have been affected by 'social policy.' We may narrow the focus: I shall be discussing . . . *federal* social policy, not variations among states and localities" (emphasis in original). *Losing Ground* supports government welfare systems on the state and local levels, which Murray believes "can do much better than a national system." He has defended local government welfare elsewhere as well (e.g., *Firing Line*, January 28, 1985). Whether this confidence is misplaced is not the point here; the point is that this *is* Murray's position, and not the one which Mr. Mead attributes to him. I also recall a May 1985 COMMENTARY article ["Helping the Poor: A Few Modest Proposals"] in which Murray outlined a multibillion-dollar government program aimed at reducing the illegitimacy rate among young women.

Mr. Mead says that Murray "assume[s] the poor will respond constructively if conditions are changed . . . however, the behavior of the seriously poor does not seem economic in the first place. The distressing ways of their lives . . . do not serve their own interest, let alone society's. It is doubtful that even abolishing welfare, as Murray wants, would transform them into dutiful citizens. . . . Murray treats the poor mainly as economic actors and gives limited attention to moral issues."

Yet for decades the Labor Force Participation [LFP] rates of whites and blacks were roughly equal; among young black males the rates were often *higher* than for their white counterparts. Then in the middle and late 60's we began to increase benefits substantially and make it much easier for young men or their girlfriends to obtain those benefits. Lo and behold, the LFP's of young black males picked that exact period to go into an unprecedented nosedive. Was this really just a coincidence? If not, then it would seem to fall into the category of "economic" behavior. Mr. Mead would object that such conduct does "not serve their own interest," but that hardly means that it isn't economic. Murray argues that welfare disproportionately affects poor *young* blacks, because young people often have partially developed work habits and social attitudes—i.e., they are peculiarly vulnerable to making bad choices. But the fact that a person makes a short-sighted economic decision does not mean that it isn't an economic decision at all.

But while Murray does, correctly, place considerable emphasis on economic incentives, he also gives substantial weight to attitude changes concerning moral values and personal responsibility. Such attitude changes can make it easier for a young man to *consider* a bad economic decision to quit a job or commit a crime. See *Losing Ground* on "the destruction of status rewards" which, when functioning properly, "reward the virtuous (however the culture defines them)"; on the "unwillingness to acknowledge moral inequality"; on the black high school that had to move its once-popular Honor Society awards to the evening, "with only the honorees attending—because a school-wide assembly could not be held without the student body jeering the proceedings to a halt."

According to Murray, *Losing Ground* argues that the problems of the poor "cannot be understood without understanding as well the importance of changes in crime, education, and status rewards—an interactive system that was described at length in the book and has scarcely been mentioned in any of the critiques" (*Political Science Quarterly*, Fall 1985). . . .

Mr. Mead says that "Government cannot merely offer 'freedom' to the poor; it must do something to ensure that they will do more to help themselves." To which Murray has already replied that "what touches people's lives can be as simple as a parent saying to a kid as he is growing up, 'You have to get out there and get a job no matter what.' Getting ten million parents to say that [without society contradicting them] is a hell of a lot more effective way of increasing 'job-readiness' than a Supported Work program" (*Washington Monthly*, September 1985).

Mr. Mead doubts that "the poor will respond constructively if conditions are changed." But Murray rejects the assumption "that that part of the community that we have in effect lobotomized in some sort of social-responsibility sense is filled with lumps that cannot possibly reconstitute the strengths that the rest of us still enjoy. All we have to do is start assuming that the people we want to help are in fact very much like you and me" (*Firing Line*). The black popula-

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tion that boasted high youth LFP's in the early 1960's did not undergo some massive genetic mutation by the end of that decade. Behavior changed because *conditions* changed, and the same principle that helped to get us into this mess can help to get us out of it.

And is the attention that Murray gives to "moral issues" really as "limited" as Mr. Mead thinks? Murray believes that it is

> proper to distinguish among certain qualities in people, that we create a society that does recognize class distinctions but not distinctions based on how much money you take in, which in many ways is the ethic I think we have bequeathed in the last couple of decades to poor people. I want to see a social policy that lets the man who is a janitor but who has raised a family think of himself as being special by virtue of having held a job and raised a family. He's one of the good people. He is the backbone of the country. He's got to be able to think of himself that way, and a social policy that puts him back on a pedestal has done no small good. [*Washington Monthly*, September 1985]

Intellectually, Lawrence Mead is head and shoulders above the liberal hatchetmen (like Robert Greenstein) who have contemptibly misrepresented Murray's analysis. But that means that we have a right to expect much more from him. It is essential that serious scholars fully comprehend the lessons of Murray's work, not because his solutions are perfect and beyond dispute, but because the analysis upon which those solutions are based is rich and varied and usually right on target.

JACK NOBLE, JR.
Los Angeles, California

LAWRENCE M. MEAD writes:

Jack Noble, Jr. correctly notes that Charles Murray did not propose the abolition of *all* welfare in *Losing Ground*, nor did he ignore the role of "moral values and personal responsibility" in shaping behavior. I would go further—attention to these noneconomic dimensions is one of the reasons, along with its obvious literary and philosophical virtues, for the book's great influence.

I did not discuss these subtleties simply because I could not in an article of this length. The same limitation made my original review of *Losing Ground*, in the New York *Times*, sound more critical than I felt. I have since published a fuller and warmer appraisal in the current issue of *Academic Questions*, the journal of the National Association of Scholars, and many of my points are the same as Mr. Noble's.

However, it is still true that *Losing Ground* gives excessive weight to the disincentives to good behavior created by welfare. I and others have thought that these effects are not strong enough to explain all the social problems Murray links to them. Mr. Noble's own comments on how benefits inspire dysfunction strike the same note of an *automatic* connection that emanates from much of Murray's book. Perhaps Murray's real view is broader, but one has to read between the lines to see it. His more explicit admissions about noneconomic causes, cited by Mr. Noble, come mostly from later statements and writings, not from *Losing Ground*.

It is also still fair to characterize Murray's main conclusions as anti-welfare and anti-government. Although he supports local welfare programs, he clearly opposes welfare that is generous enough to compete with low-skilled earnings and which is given with no questions asked about clients' behavior. Since this is just the kind of welfare that federal funding has fostered, to end the latter *is* to end "welfare" as the nation has recently known it, even if local assistance continues.

And if Murray wants mainstream mores enforced, he and most conventional conservatives want the job done by parents and other private authorities, not by government. But what do we do if these authorities abdicate, if there is no family structure in the ghetto worthy of the name? Other conservatives say that public institutions must then at least *try* to uphold the civilities most essential to American life. Schools must enforce adequate standards, police must enforce the law, and welfare programs must demand work effort from their clients.

Church and State

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The articles on Mikhail Gorbachev by Alain Besançon ["Gorbachev Without Illusions," April] and Natan Sharansky ["As I See Gorbachev," March] again remind us of the sophisticated international diplomacy practiced by the USSR since Lenin. Its consistency makes the West look—in the words of Dante—like "fallen people, souls who have lost the good of intellect." It is a depressing situation.

Mr. Besançon notes that Western diplomats and the press for the most part accept unquestioningly the premise that the Soviet Union is a state like any other with which normal peaceful relations could and should be maintained. I would have liked it if both authors had also mentioned the role the churches have played in perpetuating this delusion

As an Anglican, I have for years been coming across this idea in the *Episcopalian* and the *Witness*, two national Episcopal publications. . . . The only villain, they say, is a United States government that talks peace but hypocritically builds up for war against peace-loving Russia. The bishops voice this view almost unanimously and it is frequently echoed in pulpits.

Recently, however, two anti-establishment voices have emerged within the Episcopal Church. One is the Christian Rescue Effort for the Emancipation of Dissidents (CREED) and the other is the Episcopal Committee on Religion and Freedom. In a recent issue of the *Anglican Digest* a representative of CREED examines the official Episcopal paper on the Russian Church and finds it superficial and misleading. The writer criticizes the document for being benevolent at the expense of overlooking current acts of religious suppression practiced by the Soviet government. Similarly, a recent issue of *Religion and Democracy* contains an article censuring the Episcopal Church's noncritical participation in both the World Council of Churches and the National Council of Churches. . . .

These voices are small, and their influence is almost invisible within the national Episcopal Church. However they do show that the pew does not summarily take in what the pulpit says. And we can see that some Episcopalians are at last organizing to express their loyal opposition. . . .

DOUGLAS H. SCHEWE
Madison, Wisconsin

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Socrates

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his review of I. F. Stone's book, *The Trial of Socrates* [Books in Review, March], Donald Kagan states: "The notion that he [Socrates] wanted to die in order to spite the democracy and make himself a martyr to the anti-democratic cause is ludicrous. If there was any martyrdom intended it was in behalf of philosophy and the freedom to seek the truth by inquiry." I would like to suggest that Socrates' death was both a philosophical and political martyrdom.

Socrates (and Plato who used Socrates as a mouthpiece in his dialogues) believed that truth could be arrived at through the dialectic. Their fellow Sophists, those teachers Mr. Kagan slyly criticizes because they accepted payment for their services whereas Socrates did not, believed that truth could be arrived at through rhetoric. As Stone correctly points out, rhetoric was used by the people to defend themselves in the courts of Athens. Thus, at least indirectly, the Sophists were promoting democracy. Socrates and Plato frequently condemn these Sophists, supposedly for their teaching of rhetoric, but in reality they were also opposed to their fellow Sophists because they were aiding the cause of democracy which Socrates and Plato hated. . . .

Socrates was faced with a double-edged dilemma. If he used the dialectic and established his innocence, it would support the validity of his philosophical system, but it would also support the integrity of democracy, the political system he adamantly opposed. If he used the dialectic and was found guilty, he would invalidate his own system and democracy would again prevail.

Socrates could not resort to the rhetoric of his fellow Sophists, the rhetoric that his fellow Athenians used to defend themselves in court. If he did, . . . whether he was found innocent or guilty he would be abandoning his whole philosophical system and making a mockery of everything he believed in, and, again, democracy would prevail.

I believe that Socrates' course of action was . . . the only course he could have pursued in order to protect both his philosophical and political beliefs. He deliberately chose not to defend himself using the dialectic because either he feared that . . . it could not prove his innocence (and thus the truth) or he could not . . . face the possibility of having it prove his innocence while demonstrating that democracy did, in fact, work. . . .

Socrates was not a martyr to seeking the truth by inquiry as Mr. Kagan suggests. If there was any philosophical martyrdom intended, it was in behalf of Socrates' and Plato's system of philosophy only and the freedom to seek the truth by dialectic only. After reading Stone's book it is not ludicrous to think that the drinking of the hemlock was both a political ploy against democracy and a dramatic gesture to save Socrates' and Plato's precious dialectic.

WILLIAM MOYER
Cheltenham, Pennsylvania

DONALD KAGAN writes:

William Moyer is wrong to think that I intended criticism, sly or not, of the Sophists for taking pay for their teaching. I take pay for mine and, like Protagoras, think I give very good value for the money. He is wrong in a more important way in associating the Sophists with democracy. Since they charged a considerable fee for their services, their customers were chiefly the rich, most of whom were aristocrats, the chief opponents of the democracy. The ordinary democrat of small means found himself at a great disadvantage in the assembly and law courts when confronted by rich and noble opponents trained by the new rhetoric.

The traditions undermined by many of the Sophists, moreover, were democratic traditions, over a hundred years old by the end of the 5th century. Aristocratic enemies of the democracy, in fact, found a basis for rejecting democracy in the criticism of traditional views and tenets made by these Sophists. The quarrel, then, was not between Socrates the enemy of democracy and the Sophists its defenders, but was deeper than an argument about political systems. Socrates surely rejected democracy as a good form of government, but he was not its fanatical enemy who would die, even in part, as "a political ploy" against it. He lived under its laws for seventy years and never left Athenian territory except to fight bravely in defense of his democratic homeland. He took no part in the two anti-democratic plots to overthrow it. Even when condemned to death by a democratic jury he refused to flee to safety in another land under a different regime. Instead he chided his friends who urged him to escape, for failure to respect Athens's laws, that is, democratic laws. If such a man chose to die rather than defend himself it was not for political reasons but for something he thought more important.

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Glasnost & Its Limits

Walter Laqueur

Glasnost, both the term and the concept, has a long and honorable history. It was one of the main demands put forward by 19th-century Russian radicals, figuring prominently in the early issues of *Kolokol* ("The Bell"), the only free Russian periodical published at the time. "Where there is no *glasnost*," Aleksandr Herzen wrote in the late 1850's, "and no legal right but only the charity of the czar, public opinion has no influence, the intrigues of the anteroom and the alcove prevail." And again: "Whoever opposes *glasnost*, whoever is against the liberation of the serfs, he is an enemy of the people, he is our enemy. . . ." In his farewell letter to his friends ("From the Other Shore," Paris, March 1, 1849), Herzen once again invoked *glasnost* in explaining his decision not to return to Russia:

> The struggle here in Western Europe is public despite the bloodshed and the tears. Woe to the vanquished, but they are not defeated before they had their word. . . . Where the free word has not been killed, the cause is not yet lost. Because of this open struggle, because of free speech and *glasnost*, I shall remain here.

We also find the term *glasnost* mentioned some forty times in Lenin's collected works, mainly after the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. Stalin was not exactly a great believer in the notion, although even in his day lip service to it was never entirely discontinued. Brezhnev, too, referred to *glasnost* from time to time, and the word appears in the Soviet Constitution of 1977. On the other side of the Soviet divide, *glasnost* was one of the main demands put forward during those years by dissidents like Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn and Andrei Sakharov.

In the most recent edition of the *Soviet Political Dictionary* (1987), *glasnost* is defined as follows:

> One of the most important democratic principles guaranteeing the openness of the work of the organs of government; access, so that society can inform itself about their activities. *Glasnost* is the most developed form of control by the masses of the population over the organs of government, especially the local ones, of the struggle against bureaucratism. The most important channels of *glasnost* are the means of mass information, oral propaganda, and visual aids such as displays. Information which contains state and military secrets, industrial production, crime investigation, and medicine is not subject to *glasnost*. (See also entry on *Revolutionary Vigilance*.)

This is a fairly accurate definition, even though "oral propaganda" and "visual aids such as displays" look out of place in this context, and it is odd that the inviolability of the doctor-patient relationship should have to be specified. As for the reference to "revolutionary vigilance," with its special connotations dating back to the days of Stalin, the mere phrase points to the limits of *glasnost*.

But why should such a lengthy explanation be needed in the first place? Why, too, is it so difficult to find synonyms or an exact translation of *glasnost* into other languages? The reason is that *glasnost* is not exactly freedom of speech, or the kind of cultural or political freedom known in the West, but a specifically Russian phenomenon: the attempt to combine a non-democratic or anti-democratic mode of government with a certain degree of cultural freedom, with accountability (especially on the lower levels of the administration), and with "transparency." Although *glasnost* can be and has been interpreted as a step toward democracy, in itself it is not the same thing as democracy; if there were democratic freedoms there would be no need for *glasnost* as a discrete element of the political system.

The way *glasnost* is used in the Western media has added to the confusion. We are frequently told that Soviet actions in Afghanistan, or toward the Armenians, or in the domestic economy are a "touchstone for the *glasnost* policy." In fact, however, *glasnost* does not refer to the substance of politics but to approach and style. *Glasnost* is not *perestroika* (roughly, "restructuring"), though Gorbachev believes it is a precondition of *perestroika*. (There seem to be differences on this count within the Politburo.) It is not a synonym for the

WALTER LAQUEUR is chairman of the Research Council of the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, D.C. He is the author of *America, Europe, and the Soviet Union*, *The Age of Terrorism*, and, most recently, a study of *glasnost*, to be published by Scribner's later this year.

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Soviet reform policy in general. In Lenin's suggestive words, quoted frequently by Gorbachev, *glasnost* means, rather, "letting the party know everything."

II

BE ALL THAT as it may, *glasnost* has opened one of the most fascinating chapters in Russian cultural history and, to a lesser extent, in Soviet society. Under *glasnost*, complaints about many aspects of Soviet life have been voiced in a way that was unthinkable even a few years ago. Cultural controls and restrictions have been either lifted or loosened; books have been published, plays and movies performed, paintings and sculptures exhibited that had been banned for many years. Informal societies have sprung up outside the party and its satellite organizations, and in them topics once taboo are freely (or almost freely) discussed. It is as if a wave of pent-up energy had suddenly found a release, with a consequence that has been compared to the exhilarating effects of inhaling pure oxygen. There has been no singing and dancing in the streets—as there was after the October manifesto of 1905 in which Russia was promised a constitution—but there has been great excitement, at least among the intelligentsia.

Vasili Shukshin (1929-74), born in Siberia, worker, teacher, subsequently one of the leading film producers and actors of his time as well as a very gifted and enormously popular writer, once asked, "What has become of us?" This question could very well serve as the official slogan of *glasnost*. True, all the problems of Soviet society had long been identified, and some even articulated. Everyone with eyes to see and ears to hear was aware of the state of things. But with *glasnost* the perspective changed: what had been considered minor blemishes on an overall positive balance-sheet were now recognized as major threats to society.

Nor had the deeper reasons for these evils ever been discussed freely and frankly: according to the official line, they were remnants of Russia's unfortunate pre-revolutionary past. Now, however, such explanations were set aside in favor of a larger possibility: what if the evils were rooted not in the past but in the present? Finally, even among those who had raised questions little attention was paid to what would later become known as the "human factor," to issues of morality, to the quality of life. Although there was the occasional newspaper editorial or novel about corruption, embezzlement, and other aspects of the darker side of Soviet society, these were somehow considered "untypical," describing situations that could be remedied by administrative measures, greater vigilance, stricter controls. With *glasnost*, the questioning took on scope as well as depth.

The decision to launch the *glasnost* campaign was a courageous one, as is shown simply by listing a few of the areas touched upon by it. *Glasnost*, for example, has brought revelations about the state of women in Soviet society. As one woman author wrote, "Our statistics give one the impression of Soviet women as happy, hard-working, well-educated professionals good at sport, dancing, and singing, active in unions and in public life. This is a highly inaccurate picture. . . ." (In some cities, the divorce rate reaches 80 or 90 percent.) *Glasnost* has also shed light on prostitution, alcoholism, the wide use of drugs. It has exposed the appallingly high crime rate, as well as the serious shortcomings in the administration of justice.

Perhaps most painfully of all, *glasnost* has brought to the attention of the leadership and the public the condition of the younger Soviet generation. This has had its trivial side, as in the debates over whether rock music should be banned or coopted, whether it produces in its adepts not only moral but also biochemical changes, whether jeans affect the female body for the worse, whether youth culture is a foreign importation sent by the forces of Western imperialism to weaken the national fiber, etc. But important issues have been raised as well: the *veshism* (materialism) of the younger generation, the importance of money in its scale of values, the attitude of the older generation to youth. In theory, to quote a famous Soviet slogan, children are regarded as "the only privileged class in our society"; in fact, it has turned out, children are widely seen as a nuisance, noisy, ill-behaved, lazy, and in every respect inferior to the generation of their parents.

Equally depressing have been the revelations concerning the health service, once upon a time the pride and joy of the Soviet leadership. At issue are not just the rise in infant mortality and the decline in life expectancy. A public debate has been launched over the question of continuing free health care altogether. Most patients seem to be in favor, most doctors against. But in many ways the discussion is irrelevant; as one journalist wrote in a leading paper: "No one is ashamed to take money, this is the norm in our medicine. Now we discuss in our press whether or not we should pay for medical care. But this is sheer hypocrisy—medical care has not been free for a long time. In our hospitals, especially those in our capital, there is no room for people with empty pockets."

Many other aspects of Soviet social life have come under scrutiny: education, low pensions, creeping inflation, hidden and not so hidden poverty. There have been countless complaints over the decline in manners and morals. One writer noted that the last time he heard the phrase "pardon me" was in Leningrad in 1961. Where, another asked, has all the spite and anger come from? What has made people so hard and unfeeling? Could it be the harsh living conditions, the unending queuing, a political system which breeds dissimulation and suspicion?

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The very fact that so many look nostalgically backward rather than casting their eyes to the future is evidence of dissatisfaction and lack of confidence. There is the feeling that somehow, some time, Russian history took a wrong turn, and as a result many of the old virtues disappeared. Of course there is a tendency in all this to glorify a past which was in fact far from idyllic, but what counts is the perception of loss, along with the conviction that even a higher standard of living is no substitute for human kindness. For the Russian people to find its soul again—so it is believed—a moral revolution is needed for which the prevailing doctrine, whatever its other merits, cannot serve as a guide or compass.

III

THE impact of *glasnost* has been felt most palpably in the cultural field. The year 1987 was the *annus mirabilis* of Soviet literature, witnessing not just a second thaw but a true cultural blossoming, released (or almost released) from the frigid grasp of censorship. It was a time of enormous spiritual ferment and creative openness, of a kind and an extent not known for six decades.

In almost any other country, the fact that literary magazines were suddenly flourishing, after years of almost unrelieved drought, would not be considered a matter of paramount importance. But in Russia, literature has always played an especially powerful role. As Vissarion Belinsky put it 150 years ago, "In literature alone, despite our Tartar censorship, there is life and a forward movement."

The Gorbachev era in Soviet culture was not ushered in with a bang. It took more than a year into his tenure for *glasnost* in literature and the cinema to become manifest. But by the second half of 1986 the process was rapidly gathering momentum. The editorship of some leading literary journals changed hands. A prominent "village" writer (not even a party member) named Sergei Zalygin became editor of the magazine *Novy Mir*. Serge Baruzdin and Grigory Baklanov (Fridman) were made editors of *Druzhba Narodov* and *Znamia* respectively; neither had been known as a liberal activist, but both believe in greater freedom of expression and were willing to publish writers dealing with subjects heretofore taboo. *Literaturnaya Gazeta* and *Oktyabr* remained nominally in the hand of stalwarts of the old order, but their orientation changed considerably. *Sovyetskaya Kultura*, previously one of the most tedious publications of all, began to feature interesting essays on a great variety of topics. *Ogonyok*, once a main bulwark of the neo-Stalinists and conservatives, published political and literary exposés which drove its old supporters into near-apoplexy.

Some of the journals outside of Moscow, such as *Neva* (in Leningrad) or *Don* (in Rostov) also began to publish novels and essays that were widely read and discussed. Newspapers and periodicals doubled, tripled, quadrupled their circulation, and even so were sold out within a few minutes of delivery to the kiosk. When journalists at one of the weeklies asked their editor for guidance, he allegedly replied, "You should write as if you wanted them to come take me away."

Then there were movies. Three years ago the state of the movie industry was particularly bad, with the low quality of the films reflected in the steadily decreasing attendance. Slightly unconventional movies were either heavily censored or altogether banned; leading directors emigrated or were ostracized. Then (at the Fifth Congress of Soviet Film-Makers) there was a sudden revolt, and the old leadership was deposed.

In the theater the revolution was equally sudden and in some respects even more far-reaching. At the 15th congress of the Russian Theater Society, Oleg Efremov, head of the Moscow Art Theater, got up and proposed the establishment of a new organization of theater workers. Such an initiative might seem of no particular significance to Westerners, but in the Soviet context it was a sensation. According to established practice every Soviet theater had its repertoire approved in Moscow, and was thus totally dependent on the decisions of party officials with little or no competence in the field. The theaters were also defenseless against regional party secretaries who for one reason or another might want to ban a play even if it was being performed elsewhere in the Soviet Union. What Efremov was proposing, then, amounted to a declaration of independence.

If, on the other hand, literature has been in the vanguard of the reform movement, music and painting have lagged far in the rear. Both suffered enormously under Stalin, and even after his death the party line did not much change; to this day the infamous Zhdanov decrees of 1946-47, castigating "elitist" music and art and demanding that artists devote their energies to rallying the people around the Communist cause, have not been officially revoked, only amended. The protagonists of "official art" who head the professional organizations and the journalists who decide on exhibitions and musical programs have remained by and large in office. This has resulted in a further deterioration of standards even in fields in which Russian art has traditionally been very good, and in an exodus of younger artists, musicians, and composers who work outside the official frameworks. When, in 1987, the composers' union transferred its plenary meeting from Moscow to Kemerovo, a coalmining center in the Kuznetsk region, cynics saw it as a symbolic act: getting as far away from the capital, and *glasnost*, as possible.

IN THE academic world, an interim balance shows that there has been a great deal of cultural *glasnost* in some fields and very

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little in others. Some economists and sociologists have made good use of the new freedom, but official journals like *Voprosy Ekonomiki* and *Planovoe Khosiaistvo* show little "new thinking." The greatest resistance has come from historians and political philosophers; in political philosophy an interesting dichotomy has developed in which the organs of the Central Committee (such as *Kommunist*) have taken a more liberal line than many professionals in the field, while in Soviet history the version that has emerged in historical novels and plays differs markedly from that based on the old orthodoxy and still espoused by most academics. Whereas the great damage done by Lysenkoism to Soviet science and agriculture has been thoroughly aired, Soviet historiography, a field in which there has been at least as much lying as in genetics, has yet to undergo a housecleaning. Although the whole editorial board of *Voprosy Istorii* was fired earlier this year, it would still be unrealistic to expect much change even now; there are simply too few liberals among Soviet historians.

The crucial test facing writers of Soviet history is of course how they deal with the role of Stalin; the next most critical test is their treatment of Stalin's chief antagonist, Trotsky. According to virtually all contemporaries Trotsky was not a lovable man. While he was probably more intelligent and better educated than most other Bolshevik leaders, his political judgment was frequently suspect and sometimes utterly wrong. He often quarreled with Lenin, who after 1917 said that Trotsky had been "with us but not of us." Yet the same Lenin also remarked that since 1917 there had been no better Bolshevik than Comrade Trotsky. And in November 1918 Stalin himself wrote in *Pravda* that "all the work of practical organization of the insurrection was conducted under the immediate leadership of the president of the Petrograd Soviet, Comrade Trotsky."

The treatment of Trotsky is a litmus test of *glasnost* precisely because he has for so long been considered an arch-villain—Satan, Judas, Lucifer, the incarnation of all evil. Half a century after his assassination in Mexico, it ought to be possible to publish the truth about him. The issue is after all no longer topical: in what sense can Trotskyism as a political movement be said to constitute a real danger to Soviet power? Yet it has proved to be impossible. No more than the medieval church could detect merits in the Antichrist can Trotsky be conceded his virtues. Some beliefs are so deeply ingrained that any slight revision can cause an irreparable schism.

For similar reasons there are inbuilt limitations to telling the truth about Stalin. It can be freely admitted that Stalin committed grave mistakes, even crimes. After all, Lenin is always there to replace him as Father of the Revolution and great and good leader, unsullied by mistake or transgression. But at the same time Stalin (and Stalinism) cannot be entirely discarded without fatally undermining the legitimacy of party and state.

By contrast, the case of Nikolai Bukharin is relatively harmless; indeed, he was almost rehabilitated under Khrushchev thirty years earlier. Soviet historians agree that he was a decent man, probably too decent to cope with the difficult tasks of the 1930's. And so they have conceded that he was not, as Stalin alleged in justifying his execution, a Japanese spy or a poisoner of the wells. No such allowances, however, have been made for the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries who played a part equal or superior to that of the Bolsheviks in the struggle against czarism. Paradoxically it has proved easier to show forgiveness to some leading right-wing émigrés of 1917-18 who remained Russian patriots even in exile.

There may be another explanation for the reluctance to reexamine Soviet history, namely that the present generation of Soviet leaders knows little about the past of their own party and country. The true facts have been so well hidden that no one but experts has had access to them for decades. In other words, present-day Soviet leaders may genuinely believe what they were taught in their younger days, and this in turn may reinforce their reluctance to open painful debates. It is important to recall that the transition from Stalin to the present generation of leaders was a gradual one, and it never involved a fundamental break with the mentality and the institutions of the Stalin period. As not a few of them see it, Stalin was in many ways a great man, even though his system is now outdated. Since the past cannot be altered in any case, why risk a radical reexamination of his legacy, an undertaking which could cause great political damage? Why not trust in the healing power of time?

IV

This brings us to the question of the limits of *glasnost.*

First among them is the indifference of wide sectors of the population. It is not at all certain how much spontaneous interest there is in *glasnost* outside a few big cities. It could well be that the majority of the population is far more concerned with better food supplies and housing and in a general improvement of living conditions than in discussions of Stalin and Stalinism. *Repentance*, Tengiz Abuladze's now-famous movie about the Stalin period, has been seen by two million residents of Moscow but by only another six million outside the capital; truly popular Soviet films are watched by eighty million or more. "We have survived *zastoi* [stagnation]," it is said, "we shall also survive *glasnost*. . . ."

Then there is the active opposition to *glasnost*, which derives not just from minor party secretaries in remote corners of the Soviet Union or conservative writers fearful for their reputations and

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royalties. Some of the leading figures of the regime have also openly acted as "brakers," and few invoke the term *glasnost* anywhere nearly so often as does the General Secretary. As such people see it, criticism of negative phenomena is all well and good, but it has to be matched with constant praise for the achievements of socialism in the Soviet Union, it has to be constructive, and it has to be optimistic. If too much emphasis is placed on the negative side of things, if the great gains achieved under the leadership of the party are ignored, how can one educate young people in the spirit of Communism and patriotism? Yegor Ligachev, the number-two man in the Kremlin under Gorbachev, is not alone in believing that *glasnost* has thrown up too much froth and filth.

Someone, it is said, is needed to supervise *glasnost*, to ensure that it is not abused by sections of the Soviet population infected by the "virus of nationalism," and also by the intelligentsia. Without such supervision—so reasons Viktor Chebrikov, head of the KGB—the opponents of the Soviet system will "push individual representatives of the artistic intelligentsia into positions of carping, demagoguery, nihilism, and the blackening of certain stages of Soviet history—in short, the abandonment of the main purpose of Communist culture." To Chebrikov, the task of maintaining the "organic combination of socialist democracy and discipline" can, of course, only be fulfilled by the organs of state security—that is, the KGB.

Yet the concerns of those in state security are not the only factor in drawing narrow limits to the spread of *glasnost*. There are in the Soviet Union some 18 million bosses of one kind or another, and many more bureaucrats. They assume, not without reason, that governing the country under *glasnost* will be much more difficult than before. This is not to say there is total unanimity in their ranks, or that some bureaucrats are not more liberal in their approach than others. (Indeed, it can even be argued that the recent wholesale indiscriminate attacks against the bureaucracy contain a demagogic element, an attempt to sidestep the crucial issues and to divert criticism from where it really belongs; thus, some conservative spokesmen now claim that most of the blame for the "excesses of Stalinism" should go to the bureaucracy, of which Stalin was to a large extent a supposed prisoner.) But it is true that the bureaucracy as a whole is afraid of reform, in which many stand to lose their jobs and privileges. Since *glasnost* is an essential part of reform, they oppose it, too. Psychologically they are as unprepared to cope as the czarist bureaucracy was when a constitution was introduced in 1905.

Lastly, there are the ideological opponents of *glasnost*, a curious and uneasy coalition of "Right"and "Left." On the one side are conservative Russophiles who think that the Revolution of 1917 was a mistake and that the country must find its way back to the old values; they cannot speak quite openly and so they attack Trotsky when they mean Lenin. On the other side are the neo-Stalinists, who although they have no use for religion, Dostoevsky, the old villages, and so on, face the same enemy as the Russophiles and thus have struck what seems like a natural alliance with them.

All these various groups claim to oppose only the abuse of *glasnost*, not *glasnost* itself. In this they are at one with Gorbachev. Although he has stressed that openness and self-criticism are not a tactic but a matter of principle, that they have become the "norms of our life," he has also said that "criticism must always be true to party ideology." Or, "We are for *glasnost* without reservations and limitation. But for *glasnost* in the interest of socialism." (Socialism, that is, as defined by the Politburo of the CPSU.)

On more than one occasion Gorbachev has reassured overcautious comrades that there is no reason to become panicky in the face of criticism. He is capable of agreeing with the conservatives that *glasnost* is not a value *per se* but a means of mass control, thereby contradicting his own often stated views, but he then goes on to argue that to be more effective the media have to be given more leeway. This means fewer exhortations, less hectoring, accepting the fact that there is no need for a party line on every conceivable subject under the sun from the theory of relativity to modern ballet.

None of this means, however, that the taboo zone should be abolished altogether. That zone, as it happens, is large, including virtually all the important spheres of political life and especially those levels on which the crucial decisions are taken. Leninism is no more to be criticized than the Politburo.

Thus, in the final analysis Soviet citizens today do not know much more about the high-level debates and decisions affecting their fate than they knew in the past. And since there is no real *glasnost* with regard to what happens at the top, this makes it easier for local leaders to argue that they see no cogent reason for changing their habits.

V

How much freedom, then, has *glasnost* brought? Compared with the Stalin or Brezhnev era, certainly a great deal. But if prerevolutionary Russia is taken as the yardstick, the balance-sheet so far is less impressive. Russia had a relatively free press after 1905, and a parliament with more than one political party. The Bolsheviks were represented in the Duma and dozens of Bolshevik publications appeared in 1906 and the years after. Even in the 19th century the writings of Marx had been passed by the czarist censor as a "serious contribution to economic thought."

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(Nietzsche's works, on the other hand, could not be published before 1905.) There was an independent legal system in Russia after the 1860's, and the number of death sentences pronounced by civilian courts was probably smaller than in most European countries. True, the newspapers of 1910 reached only a small portion of the people whereas radio and television today reach virtually the whole population, but the mass media do not go nearly so far as the literary magazines in openness and self-criticism.

All in all, the Soviet media discuss the state of the nation far more freely than before. Still, as the pre-1917 experience shows, even a comparatively large degree of cultural freedom can coexist with an autocratic political system. What is likely to happen once all the banned movies and books have appeared that are going to appear, and all the revelations have come in concerning the state of the health service and agriculture?

As long as there are no legal guarantees, *glasnost* is not irreversible. What has been given can just as easily be taken away. *Glasnost* is based on hope, but if the revelations and the debates do not lead to an improvement in the situation, if the promised changes do not materialize, the hopes are bound to fade. And the fact is that reform is not likely to be a full success in the near future. The obstacles are too great, the economic and social problems too deeply structural, the political shortcomings too firmly rooted in the past. Nothing short of a cultural revolution is needed to effect real change. Only rarely in history have such revolutions occurred, and there are no signs that anything of the kind is likely to happen in the Soviet Union now.

Glasnost will be increasingly endangered because all kinds of previously suppressed tensions, national and social, are now coming to the fore. There is bound to be disorder, and this will play into the hands of those who have argued all along that the Soviet people are not ready now, and will not be ready soon, for political freedom. Such people will contend that the authoritarian style which has prevailed throughout virtually all Russian history is the only one befitting it—an enlightened authoritarianism, no doubt, but still not a system based on freedom and broad, voluntary popular participation. To be sure, even in the case of a political setback, some *glasnost* will no doubt remain in force, but its limits will in general be felt much more palpably than today.

This would seem to be the most likely scenario, but others cannot be ruled out if things threaten to go out of control. Rebellious nationalities, striking workers, unruly intellectuals, a further decline in discipline among the younger generation—all this could bring about the sense of a general crisis, calling for the harsh measures of the past. Even this would not necessarily entail, however, the emergence of a Russian party-military dictatorship, which would divide the country so deeply that it could retain power only by applying extreme measures. Nor does the return of a fully fledged Stalinist regime seem probable; the present authorities appear to have all the instruments they need to impose control.

There is reason to believe, finally, that the *glasnost* era reached its climax in 1987, and that no substantial further advances should be expected for years to come. With luck, the country will be spared a major retreat and the loss of what has been gained. With luck, ten or twenty years hence, another attempt will be made to push outward the boundaries of freedom. This seems about as far as a realistic assessment can take us.

VI

So much for the history, current status, and future prospects of *glasnost*. Let us now turn to one of the least-discussed aspects of this phenomenon, which is the light it has shed on the quality of Western studies of the Soviet Union over the last two decades. Thanks to *glasnost*, an almost unique situation exists in which it is possible to compare Western assessments and judgments of Soviet reality with what we now know actually happened. One would think such an opportunity would be welcomed enthusiastically by Western scholars. But this has not been the case, for a simple reason: in the words of Stephen F. Cohen of Princeton, "The field didn't do very well."

Of course, Sovietology can no more predict the future than can any other branch of political science. Nevertheless, in the pre-Gorbachev era books and articles on the Soviet Union were published in the West which can be read now, merely a few years later, only with embarrassment. Or perhaps they should be read as a deterrent, a warning about the infinite capacity of the human mind to be misled.

Three products of the immediate pre-*glasnost* era may serve as a starting point. The first is an article by an American scholar published in 1986 in a (German) journal specializing in the Soviet economy. The thesis, very briefly, is that notwithstanding some minor blemishes the Soviet economy has been an outstanding success; its monumental achievements include steady increases in income and living standards, state-subsidized rents averaging 3 percent of family income, with no one ("and I mean no one") lacking a roof over his head, a truly free and comprehensive health service irrespective of social position or income, jobs for everyone, a higher production of steel and sugar than the U.S., an expanding service sector, and, in sum, a rapidly narrowing productivity gap with the United States. The author goes on to accuse other American experts of bias for refusing to credit Soviet economic achievements.

Six months after the publication of this article, its author could have read in the *Soviet* media

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about stagnation and decline, about a housing shortage caused in large part by low rents, about a health service by no means free, about a shortage of sugar all over the Soviet Union, about 700 million pairs of shoes of no use to anyone because of their inferior quality, about people without roofs over their heads. An article like this one would not now be accepted for publication in a Soviet, let alone a Western, journal; it would be considered a deliberate provocation. As for the American experts whom the author criticized, far from denigrating the achievements of the Soviet economy, it turns out they more frequently erred on the side of over-optimism.

EXHIBIT two is a book, *The Origins of the Great Purges*, by J. Arch Getty.[1] According to this work, the purges of the party conducted in the late 30's mainly arose out of disagreements at the top over economic issues. Getty implies that not all that many people perished in the purges, certainly fewer than has been claimed by "cold-war" historians. He rejects most eyewitness accounts: some were too close to the events, others too distant. Nor can Khrushchev and other self-interested parties be relied upon. Getty does concede that "many thousands of innocent people were arrested and executed," and that Stalin is not altogether to be exonerated, but his main crime was apparently not to pay enough attention to what his underlings were doing.

Together with Getty, a third item should be considered, an article on the purges by Robert W. Thurston in the *Slavic Review* ("Fear and Belief in the USSR's Great Terror," Summer 1986). Thurston, as it happens, relies heavily on first-hand accounts written by survivors, but he too reaches the conclusion that there was no pervasive fear, and that the majority of people were not terrorized. Moreover, with the appointment of Lavrenty Beria as head of state security in 1938, the tortures ceased. After that date the elite was no longer harassed, and criticism from below was encouraged. Thurston, like Getty, believes that the total number of victims was smaller than commonly assumed, if only because the NKVD (the precursor of the KGB) was itself much too small to arrest so many people and keep them in camps. In short, after 1938 the Soviet Union was almost back to normal.

These two writings on the great-terror-which-never-was were treated with respect upon their publication and became the subjects of long debates in academic journals. Some reviewers supported their "findings," albeit with reservations, others disagreed, but most found them stimulating and were grateful for the new data. "A major book with major flaws" is how one reviewer described the Getty volume.

And then came *glasnost*. I do not know whether Messrs. Getty and Thurston follow the Soviet media; if they do, they cannot be very happy, for virtually every day brings yet another stab in the back to their thesis. Thus, according to one Soviet account there were 16 million inmates in the camps at the time of Stalin's death; according to another version, Stalin caused the death, directly or indirectly, of 50 million people, half of them in the terror campaign. Perhaps more significantly, an immense number of accounts have been published describing the impact of the arrests, exiles, and executions. There were, of course, some who benefited from the purges, but the general impression now emerging is that not many families in the Soviet Union escaped the loss of at least one member. Nor did the tortures cease with the rise of Beria; they continued, we are now told, throughout the war. Finally, it was not just a matter of the decimation of the elite. A recent article in *Izvestia* (April 19, 1988) tells the story of one small village near Bobruisk, consisting of sixty families altogether, from which fifteen men were arrested and taken away; only one returned, broken, many years later. Says the author in his summary: the purges were programmed murder, planned from above, designed to affect all regions and all walks of life.

It may be objected that my three exhibits of Western Sovietology are atypical and extreme. Unfortunately, authors more cautious than these were often no less wrong. Thus, one highly respected scholar writing in the pre-*glasnost* period stated that all groups in Soviet society had a share in the steady improvement of living conditions, and that by and large the Soviet regime had been able to satisfy its people's expectations. Similarly, an influential American textbook claimed that it had long been perfectly acceptable to appeal for basic changes in the political system, and that vigorous political debates took place in the Soviet Union, with the network of institutions to which citizens could appeal being "larger than in the Western countries." Again, the author of a highly praised French textbook (which also appeared in the U.S.) asserted that in the Soviet Union the intelligentsia, elsewhere an alienated and contentious element, had been successfully integrated into the system. And leading British academic experts proclaimed themselves greatly impressed by the lot of Soviet workers under Brezhnev, and by the motivation of young people in the Soviet Union. One could go on like this almost indefinitely.

At one time—say, in the early 60's—such optimism on the part of Western scholars was easier to explain. There was more confidence at that time even inside the Soviet Union, greater belief in the omnipotent power of technology, and also a lower level of popular expectation. But how to account

[1]Cambridge University Press, 1985.

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for the profound misjudgments of Soviet reality in so many works written during the late 1960's, the 70's, and the early 80's?

To some extent, no doubt, the cause is simply ideological bias; to a perhaps larger extent, it is the traditional Western inability to understand political and social systems different from our own. Then there is also the inbuilt and habitual academic tendency to rely on facts and figures, which in the case of the Soviet Union meant the official facts and figures.

HISTORIANS will be busy for a long time analyzing this fascinating and puzzling phenomenon, but an interpretation of it offered decades ago by Adam Ulam of Harvard is still largely applicable:

> We who study Soviet affairs have—why try to conceal it—a skeleton in our filing cabinets. To describe this skeleton let me invoke a fictitious case of two fictitious characters, X and Y. In his attempt to learn as much as possible about the Soviet Union, X, between roughly 1930 and 1950, read nothing but the works of reputable, non-Communist authors. He grounded himself on the writings of the Webbs and Sir John Maynard Keynes. Turning to the American academicians, he followed the studies of the Soviet government, law, and various aspects of Soviet society which might have come from the pen of a professor at Chicago, Harvard, Columbia, or Williams. This serious intellectual fare would be supplemented by the reading of the most objective non-academic experts on Russia, and finally of those few journalists who had no axe to grind, especially the ones who had spent a long time in the Soviet Union.
>
> His friend Y had an equal ambition to learn, but his taste ran to the non-scholarly and melodramatic. Indifferent to objectivity, he would seek the key to Soviet politics in the writings of the avowed enemies of the regime, like the ex-Mensheviks; he would delight in the fictional accounts *à la* Koestler or Victor Serge. Sinking lower, Y would pursue trashy or sensational stories of the "I Was a Prisoner of the Red Terror" variety. He would infuriate X by insisting that there were aspects of Soviet politics which are more easily understood by studying the struggle between Al Capone and Dan Torrio than the one between Lenin and Martov, or the dispute about "socialism in one country."
>
> Which of our fictitious characters would have been in a better position to understand the nature of Soviet politics under Stalin?

Today the issue is no longer Stalin and the Mensheviks. The "I-escaped-from-the-clutches-of-the-Cheka" literature has long disappeared from the scene, to be replaced by the reports of Soviet émigrés or others who for a variety of reasons—we are told—cannot be relied upon. It might therefore seem reasonable to suppose that the scholarly approach, as practiced for instance by a J. Arch Getty, would have issued in an assessment far closer to Soviet reality. But it did not. The ironic result is that, thanks to *glasnost*, it is now safer to trust Soviet sources on the pre-*glasnost* situation than to rely on the work of some "major" Western scholars.

VII

A TRUE and full post-mortem on the last two decades of Western Sovietology still remains to be performed—a painful business, no doubt, but a necessary one, for the mistakes of the past have a tendency to recur unless laid to rest. In the meantime, however, a number of books about the *new* era in the Soviet Union have appeared in the West, and it is not too soon to take their measure.

Two collections of essays prepared early on, before a clear picture of *glasnost* and *perestroika* had emerged, nevertheless make important contributions to our knowledge. Maurice Friedberg and Heyward Isham's *Soviet Society Under Gorbachev*[2] concentrates mainly on the social-cultural field, Martin McCauley's *The Soviet Union Under Gorbachev*[3] on the economic field. Michel Tatu, a seasoned observer of the Soviet political scene, has written (in French) a political biography of Gorbachev; while he tries to keep an open mind about the Soviet leader's prospects, he clearly believes that the difficulties facing him are so formidable that the chances for success are less than brilliant.[4] Meanwhile, a number of German books take a more optimistic line, going so far in at least one case as to compare Gorbachev's reforms in political importance with the revolution of 1917.[5]

Some of the authors of new studies are well-known specialists: in addition to Tatu, the American scholar Jerry Hough has written on the political side of things in *Russia and the West: Gorbachev and the Politics of Reform*,[6] while Moshe Lewin in *The Gorbachev Phenomenon: A Historical Interpretation*[7] concentrates on social history and in particular on the history of Soviet agriculture. Worthy of mention too are Marshall I. Goldman, *Gorbachev's Challenge*;[8] Alexander Yanov, *The Russian Challenge and the Year*

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[2] M.E. Sharpe, 1987.

[3] St. Martin's Press, 1987.

[4] *Gorbachev: L'URSS va-t-elle changer?* Le Centurion (Paris), 1987.

[5] Christian Schmid Haeuer, *Gorbachevs zweite Revolution* (Berlin, 1987); Uwe Engelbrecht, *Glasnost—Neue Offenheit* (Cologne, 1987); Klaus Beyme in Margarete Mommsen, *Gorbachevs Revolution von Oben* (Berlin, 1987). Boris Meissner in *Die Sowjetunion im Umbruch* (Stuttgart, 1988) takes a more skeptical view with regard to the prospects of *perestroika* but believes that the quest for greater freedom will continue even if the reforms fail to have the desired effect.

[6] Simon & Schuster, 301 pp., $19.95.

[7] University of California Press, 176 pp., $16.95.

[8] Norton, 256 pp., $16.95.

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2000;[9] and Mark Frankland, *The Sixth Continent: Mikhail Gorbachev and the Soviet Union*.[10]

To Jerry Hough, who teaches at Duke University, belongs the merit of being probably the first person in the United States to have predicted, in early 1983, the emergence of Gorbachev as the top leader.[11] (The very first to do so was an Englishman named Archie Brown at St. Antony's College, Oxford, who wrote in 1982 that although Gorbachev had attracted little or no attention as a possible successor to Brezhnev, he was in a number of respects the most obvious choice.) Hough's prescience was weakened by his admission that the political meaning of Gorbachev's rise was "not totally clear," which was another way of saying that it was not clear at all. But such are the inherent debilities of Kremlinology: in fact, *no one* knew at the time the meaning of Gorbachev; a Soviet leader has to keep his views vague until he has reached the very pinnacle of his political career.

Hough's attitude toward Brezhnev had been extremely positive—so much so that his enthusiasm for Gorbachev was a little bewildering: what need for *perestroika* if the situation was so good? Such bewilderment is bound to grow with *Russia and the West*. Here, Hough proposes that his readers conceive of the Bolshevik takeover in 1917 as the Khomeini revolution in Russian history—in other words, a right-wing, xenophobic uprising that precipitated a break with the natural course of Russian history. Gorbachev's role, as Hough sees it, is to undo the damage perpetrated seventy years ago by opening up the country to the West and restoring Russia to "that which is normal for it." Gorbachev's reforms embody large elements of Reaganism-Thatcherism, his main support comes from the bureaucracy, his main opposition from the intellectuals. As for the workers, they will have to shape up; under Brezhnev, economic growth was sacrificed to social welfare, and this coddling must be stopped.

It is hard to know whether Hough is always serious; he clearly likes the role of gadfly, which he plays to the hilt in his frequent appearances on American talk shows. The comparison with Khomeini is provocative, but this does not make it correct. Nor is it true that the bureaucracy is Gorbachev's chief ally. Since a substantial number of the millions of bureaucrats in the Soviet Union will lose their jobs if Gorbachev has his way, it would be an act of superhuman altruism if they were to cooperate in their own liquidation. And, of course, Hough is wrong about the intellectuals, who are among Gorbachev's main supporters, not among his opponents.

As for the lot of the workers under Brezhnev, he managed to bring about a relative decline in their standard of living *and* partly to dismantle the Soviet welfare state. But at least Hough cannot be accused of sentimentalizing labor: although, he says, the situation of the workers will not be brilliant in the years to come, they will have their rock music to comfort them.

What should the response of the United States be to Gorbachev? Hough suggests we follow the dictum of Calvin Coolidge: "The business of America is business." Since we have already won the cold war, we should be ready at long last to jettison our anti-Sovietism, the driving force of our foreign policy.

Here Hough is a little behind the curve. What vestiges of anti-Sovietism remain in Washington's thinking seem now pretty pallid. Shortly before Gorbachev's visit to Washington last year, President Reagan declared on national television that the Soviet leader had given up the idea of Communist world domination, was committed to nuclear disarmament, and was not responsible for the war in Afghanistan. Since then Reagan has added approvingly that Gorbachev has reverted to the teachings of Lenin—"programs that he called new economics and things of that kind"—and (before the most recent Moscow summit) even praised Gorbachev's human-rights record. It is not clear how much further Hough wants to go; if he wishes Gorbachev well, he must know that too fervent an embrace will not help him.

Hough does make a number of sensible points in this book, in particular that the United States probably does not have at its command a great deal of leverage over Soviet policy. If the Soviet Union is determined to "reintegrate in the West" (Hough's words), it is very unlikely that we could block the process, even assuming we would want to. And we are likely to be even less effectual if there is no such intention.[12]

Of the books published so far on Gorbachev, the one by Moshe Lewin is the most interesting, the best written, the most

[9] Blackwell, 302 pp., $24.95.

[10] Harper & Row, 292 pp., $22.95.

[11] *Problems of Communism*, January/February 1983. Hough called Gorbachev "extremely well-connected," but the five political friends named by Hough were certainly not the ones who made his rise possible. One died soon after, two (Chernenko and Grishin) were anything but allies, and the last two were of no consequence and soon disappeared from view.

[12] In this connection it is difficult to understand the pervasive harping by American commentators on the notion that Gorbachev needs our "help." According to this line of thought, as articulated by, for example, Joseph Nye, Jr. and Edwin Mroz in the Washington *Post* (October 4, 1987) and Robert Legvold in the London *Times* (November 18, 1987), Gorbachev has undertaken the "most far-reaching revamping of the Soviet system in more than half a century" (Nye-Mroz) and on many points the Soviet Union is moving toward Western preferences. Instead of coming to terms with these changes, the West (according to these authors) has adopted a wait-and-see attitude which can only retard the Soviet Union's further adaptation. Wrong as to the response of many in Washington, which if anything has been overeager in its reaction to Gorbachev, this analysis is naive in its assumption that the United States can somehow induce the Soviet Union to act against its own best judgment.

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closely reasoned, and, I believe, the most misleading. Like Hough, Lewin has a bee in his bonnet. In Hough's case, it is the Khomeini-like character of the Bolshevik Revolution. For Lewin, it is the shameful neglect by Western scholars of Soviet society (as distinct from Soviet politics) and social history. Many Western analysts, Lewin writes indignantly, have ignored the vast changes that have taken place in the Soviet system—urbanization, industrialization, the growth of the professional and industrial classes—and on the basis of a distorted political reading have wrongly diagnosed a society in stagnation and decline.

This is not true, however; most Western experts have been perfectly aware of urbanization and industrialization. How far one can go in drawing political conclusions on the basis of these trends is another question altogether. Lewin, for one, goes very far indeed. His thesis is that irreversible structural changes have taken place in the Soviet Union. The house that Stalin built was the product of a rural country steeped in the authoritarian tradition. Today, well-educated urbanites are the largest demographic group. A "civil society" has come into being, irreverent toward censorship, police controls, and the *nomenklatura*. A massive public is ready to listen to different, controversial voices. Among the voices are those of an increasing number of scholars and specialists who meet privately to work out solutions to the endless imbalances of society; in this way the Soviet social sciences are in the process of formulating what amounts to a new ideology. Even if the ideas and suggestions of the social scientists are not accepted, in any case they engage the "good, creative, ambitious dreams of a country just awakening from long slumber."

According to Lewin, Soviet society cries out for a state that can match its own complexity. The time is now ripe (or ripening) for the system to reclaim some of the hopes of its idealists. A tremendous amount of spontaneous energy is waiting only to be unleashed. There is no danger of an authoritarian, conservative backlash. The conservatives, nationalists, and neo-Stalinists have had their chances and failed. Today the Soviet leadership seems to be counting on the new freedoms to release the pent-up social creativity within the party. It was these hidden forces that produced Gorbachev, and "now he must continue to mine that vein."

True, from time to time Lewin issues warnings: we do not really know much about the character of the Soviet working class, or about the bureaucracy, or about the new evolving urban elite; in fact we do not know enough about Soviet society in general. But then, within a few sentences the noble dreams he has spun take over again, and we hear once more about rising social energies and about sociologists as the new philosopher-kings:

> Through numerous channels, some visible, some slow, insidious, and imperceptible, Soviet urban society is affecting individuals, groups, institutions, and the state. Civil society is talking, gossiping, demanding, sulking, expressing its interests in many ways and thereby creating moods, ideologies, and public opinion.

LEWIN is not the only scholar to stress the concept of the "civil society."[13] If the Soviet Union has indeed developed complex social bodies and a social system with classes and public cultures and countercultures, then the state and the party obviously have to take into account the mood and the aspirations of the people to a far greater extent than in the past. But they always had to do so to *some* extent. Mussolini's idea that in a totalitarian system there would be no social activity outside the state was a chimera from the beginning. Even under Stalin, even under Hitler, there was such a thing as public opinion, however inchoate. (Hitler, to give one insignificant example, was prevented by public opinion from imposing a ban on smoking in public places, despite the fact that he hated the practice.) No one would deny that in the Soviet Union public opinion has become more outspoken in recent years (and also more polarized), or that it is very difficult if not impossible for any Soviet government to push through manifestly unpopular policies. Hence, the withdrawal from Afghanistan; hence, the decision not to go ahead with the schemes for rerouting the rivers of Siberia. But this was also true under Brezhnev—which is in fact why all *his* attempts at reform led only to further stagnation.

Millions of people read *Novy Mir* and *Ogonyok*, want more freedom and a more democratic society. But they are still only a minority, while the forces confronting them are much stronger. Lewin points to certain social trends but exaggerates their political implications and all too often sees only one side of the new realities. One reads a great deal about urbanization in his book, and about the old saw that city air makes for freedom. The movement from village to city is a demographic fact, but it is also true that contemporary urban life in the Soviet Union is the source not so much of freedom as of many social discontents. The new Russian Right has made all this a central item in its political agenda, a fact which may have escaped Lewin's attention.

Finally, take the idea of sociologists as the new gurus of Soviet society. We are witnessing now the beginnings of sociology in the Soviet Union; thirty years ago, there was none. Its practitioners

[13] See, for example, S. Frederic Starr, "Soviet Union: A Civil Society," *Foreign Policy*, Spring 1988. The concept has also been used by some Soviet publicists such as Fyodor Burlatski, who belongs to Gorbachev's brain trust. In his article, Starr corrects Gorbachev with regard to the Soviet domestic situation. He writes: "Where Gorbachev is seriously wrong, and where many Americans err in accepting his view, is his claim that the manifest stagnation in the Communist party and bureaucracy pervaded Soviet society as well."

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carry out small-scale public-opinion polls; some write speeches for Gorbachev and even provide ideas for him. But the belief that sociologists somehow hold the keys (or the levers) to profound change in Soviet social and political life is wishful thinking—and not just because the basic tenets of Soviet Communism cannot possibly be the subject of a critical sociological study. A leading Western scholar of these matters has recently observed that sociology in the Soviet Union is expected not only to propose specific measures within the general framework of the reform policy but to find ways and means of overcoming social apathy.[14] Even if one ignores the fact that social apathy is rooted deep in the structure of the system, these unrealistic assignments go far beyond what any sociology can do.

The factual basis on which Lewin's predictions rest is minute: some reports by the (London) *Guardian* correspondent in Moscow and a handful of articles in Soviet academic journals. If Lewin were writing about Brazil or Australia, as a rigorous social historian he would have dismissed such evidence as altogether insufficient for far-reaching conclusions. But he is not writing about Australia or Brazil but instead about a land which despite every betrayal over the last seven decades still seems capable of arousing the hopes of people who should know better. Critical faculties are temporarily suspended, and a faith is revealed which is in some ways touching but which is also very likely to lead to fresh disappointments.[15]

VIII

Gorbachev's policies, to be sure, have not been universally welcomed in the West. Soon after the General Secretary came to power he was called a Stalinist by the prominent émigré intellectual, Vladimir Bukovsky; it would appear Bukovsky has not changed his view since then.[16] Although he grants that Gorbachev has introduced certain changes, Bukovsky argues that he had to do so in order to maintain the status of the Soviet Union as a superpower. And herein lies the danger: the West, galvanized by the spectacle of *glasnost*, is now ever more eager to do business with a Soviet Union which is still far from having given up its goal of building Communism at home and spreading its deadly doctrine and practice around the world. In Bukovsky's perspective, the main result of *glasnost* has thus been paradoxically not to weaken but to strengthen the threat posed by the Soviet Union to the West.

A not dissimilar point of view has been expressed by the French scholar Alain Besançon in a series of articles in *L'Express* and in the American publications the *National Interest* ("What's Happening in Moscow?: A Symposium," Summer 1987) and Commentary ("Gorbachev Without Illusions," April 1988). *Glasnost*, as Besançon sees it, is not freedom of information but a technique to implant in people's minds the belief that things are really changing, to inspire confidence in the regime, to make people forget its duplicities. It thus means informing on others, "organized squealing"—a formulation which inevitably recalls the words of Lenin (frequently invoked, as I have noted, by Gorbachev), "letting the party know everything." Besançon reports that many thousands of employees have been arrested or have absconded for fear of arrest, and that charges were brought against another 130,000 individuals in the campaign against alcoholism. Yet another function of *glasnost* in Besançon's view is to turn the Western media into an instrument of Soviet propaganda at home where that propaganda is by and large not believed.

Such interpretations of *glasnost* are a little incomplete. As Bukovsky is well aware, Gorbachev's approach is not the only one for coping with the difficulties of the Soviet Union; if it were, there would be no differences in the Politburo. One could argue that in the final analysis these are differences of opinion among Stalinists of one kind or another and therefore of no great importance, but on the basis of such sweeping generalizations it is difficult to make sense of domestic events in today's Soviet Union. Nor are Bukovsky's fears that the West will end up paying for Communist expansion fully warranted just now. Trade with the West has in fact sharply declined over the last few years, and the Russians have not been the beneficiaries of massive credits (except for some from West Germany, but these too are quite inadequate considering Soviet needs).

In Besançon's writings one detects some inconsistencies. In contrast to Lewin, he writes that all groups in Soviet society, "be they social classes, religious denominations, professional societies, organized political groups, or nationalist movements are kept under surveillance, penetrated, and periodically broken up or purged of their most dangerous elements"; but he also concedes that in many places Soviet workers have largely escaped the control of the state ("we pretend to

[14] R. Ahlberg, "*Die Aufgaben der Soziologie bei der Umgestaltung der sowjetischen Gesellschaft*," *Osteuropa* 3, 1988.

[15] Isaac Deutscher, the biographer of Trotsky and Stalin, published a book soon after Stalin's death in which he predicted a return, almost immediately, to the allegedly democratic origins of Leninism, and the dismantling of the Stalinist apparatus as a consequence of objective social factors such as industrialization, urbanization, higher educational levels, etc. Ironically, Deutscher never received any credit in the Soviet Union for his optimism, and in recent months his assessment of Stalin has in fact been criticized in *Pravda* for being much too positive.

[16] The original thesis was developed in an article in *Obozrenie*. In 1987 Bukovsky commented on the same topic in a discussion, *Glasnost: How Open?*, Freedom House, 1987. See also his article in Commentary, "Will Gorbachev Reform the Soviet Union?" (September 1986).

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work, they pretend to pay us," the joke goes). As recent events suggest, moreover, the Soviet authorities have not been so successful in breaking up national movements in Central Asia, the Caucasus, and the Baltic region. Just as significantly, the chief advocates of *glasnost* in the 1960's and 1970's—Solzhenitsyn, Sakharov, and Valery Chalidze—were people whom Besançon could hardly accuse of being manipulated, or of desiring to make the masses forget the duplicity of the regime. As Solzhenitsyn wrote in an open letter when he was excluded from the Soviet Writers Union in 1969: "*Glasnost*, that is the first condition of health in all societies. He who does not wish this openness for his country does not want to purify it of its diseases, but only to drive them inward to fester. . . ."

Of course, as Tolstoy pointed out in a letter to a British editor as long ago as 1895, *glasnost* can mean one thing to subjects yearning for freedom, another thing to rulers with the power to manipulate. Even so, however, it may not prove so easy to control a process launched with so much vigor from on high. And even if, as Michel Tatu and Alain Besançon assert (and as I would agree), the limits of *glasnost* may be reached fairly quickly, the effects will not so quickly disappear. In this respect I would place much more emphasis than does Besançon on the workings of *glasnost* in the realm of culture and ideas as opposed to the political and especially the economic spheres. The latter areas, to put it simply, are easier to control, while the former move in mysterious and often unpredictable ways.

ONE day it may well appear that *glasnost* was no more than a short interlude, or more likely, that the revelations made in its name failed to lead to decisive change. But even in the case of a major setback, we would not have heard the last of *glasnost* as the outward and visible sign of the struggle of ideas and orientations inside the Soviet Union. Over the outcome of this struggle we have no influence, and yet we must not be indifferent to it. For Soviet policy at home and abroad will depend largely on how it is resolved.

That most Soviet leaders want economic reform with a minimum of political and social reform goes without saying. Have they ever claimed anything else? But one should be mindful of a verse of Horace, *semel emissum volat irrevocabile verbum*, "a word once spoken cannot be revoked." In the long term this may well be true of *glasnost*. It has a momentum of its own.

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Munich at Fifty

Williamson Murray

It is now fifty years since Adolf Hitler, Neville Chamberlain, Edouard Daladier, and Benito Mussolini met at Munich in September 1938 to strip Czechoslovakia of its territory and its defenses. The rationales for British and French policy ran the gamut from strategic *raison d'état,* to a basic rejection of the use of force in the international arena, to abject fear. The results were catastrophic. The British and the French came close to losing everything to a Nazi tyranny that would, in Winston Churchill's memorable phrase, have brought "a new Dark Age made more sinister, and perhaps more protracted, by the lights of perverted science." But as is often the case, historians have obscured such moments when the world has turned in new and darker directions. Perhaps it is unavoidable; we all turn our faces from darkness.

To the people who taught me history in the 1960's Munich represented one of those hinges on which history had turned; Munich, of course, had determined their lives over the seven years that followed, and considerably for the worse. Current historiography, however, suggests that Munich was only a symptom of larger trends in the world, presaging the collapse of British and French empires and the rise of American and Soviet hegemony (at least for a short period). Munich, so the argument runs, came out of a desperate effort by the British to prevent a world war that, whether won or lost, would mean the end of empire. If so, the British failed to grasp that there is a difference between winning a war and losing one's empire and losing a war and losing one's national existence. The alternatives in 1938 were that stark. Nevertheless, whatever revisionists may write, Munich today still best symbolizes the blighted fruit of a decade of appeasement and surrender.

What most surprises me, as a military and diplomatic historian, about the wreckage of those years is the speed with which the Germans in the 1920's convinced themselves and the Anglo-American world that poor little Germany, pummeled by its neighbors and everyone else, had made peace in November 1918 on the basis of Wilson's Fourteen Points and then, tricked by sanctimonious Americans and vicious Frenchmen, awoke to find itself accused by the Treaty of Versailles of having started the war. In fact, given what we now know of their behavior before the war and their actions during it—not to mention their plans for the postwar world—the Germans got off lightly indeed in 1919.

But that was not how the Germans saw it, and they persuaded a remarkably gullible Anglo-American public and academic world that "war guilt" might be strewn generously among any number of actors: wicked merchants of death, misguided statesmen overwhelmed by events, idiotic general staffs, corrupt big businessmen. All became fashionable culprits for the war's origin, and together they gave powerful reinforcement to the tenets of modern pacifism: that anything was preferable to war, and that in any case military force and strategic issues no longer counted in international affairs. To British appeasers, whose hearts and minds were laden with the suffering and losses of World War I, it was clear that reasonable men must conclude that there had been no winners in the Great War, only losers.

The Germans, unfortunately, were neither so "reasonable" nor so averse to war. Even before Hitler came to power, they were busily engaged in kicking over the traces; after January 30, 1933 things went to hell in a hand-basket. Rearmament began in February 1933, full-scale conscription and creation of an air force followed in 1935, remilitarization of the Rhineland the year after that. But after all, said European liberals, were not the Germans only playing in their own back yard?

Then in March 1938 came the *Anschluss,* the union with Austria. In Vienna's streets tens of thousands of Waldheims cheered themselves hoarse at being absorbed into the German state. The response of the Western powers was silence. At a Cabinet meeting held as German tanks rolled across the Austro-German frontier, Prime Minister Chamberlain admitted that such unsavory activity shocked and distressed the world as "a typical illustration" of the kind of "power politics" that unfortunately made international appeasement

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somewhat more difficult. Alexander Cadogan, Permanent Secretary in the Foreign Office, noted in early April: "Thank goodness Austria's out of the way. . . . I can't work up much moral indignation until Hitler interferes with other nationalities."

CZECHOSLOVAKIA was next on Hitler's agenda. By June 1938 he had determined to smash this child of Versailles in the coming fall, ostensibly because of Czech mistreatment of the German minorities inhabiting the Sudeten border regions in which, not irrelevantly, reposed the Czech military defenses. One of the ironies of the 1938 crisis lay in the fact that in terms of minority rights, one nationality being mistreated by another—the very cause so fervently supported by today's consensus—justice lay solidly with the Germans. With the collapse of Austria-Hungary in 1918, the German-populated districts of Bohemia had petitioned the peace conference at Versailles to join the new Republican Reich. Though the affected districts were overwhelmingly in favor of union with Germany, such an aggrandizement of German political and economic power was simply unacceptable to sensible Frenchmen and Britons in 1919. It would add territory to defeated Germany and give the Germans a hammer lock on Czechoslovakia and its economic power.

By the 1930's, however, the British, like the Bourbons, had "forgotten everything and learned nothing." It had now become fashionable to argue that Britain must right the wrongs done to Germany and "appease" the German state. The British ambassador to Berlin, Neville Henderson, typified such attitudes. In his endless dispatches to London he argued that most Germans, including Hitler, were reasonable people who wished only to join the European community on terms of equality. In April 1938 Henderson wrote his boss, the British Foreign Secretary, Lord Halifax:

> What is defeatism? Is it to say that war sooner or later between Great Britain and Germany is inevitable? Or is it to say that peace can only be preserved if Germany is allowed to become one of the satisfied angels? I believe the latter; she may never be satisfied but that is a risk we have got to face. I do not mean, when one talks of satisfying Germany, giving her a free hand, but I do mean *basing one's policy toward her on moral grounds and not allowing oneself to be influenced by considerations about the balance of power* or even the Versailles treaty. We cannot win the battle for the rule of right versus might unless and until our moral position is unassailable. I feel this strongly about the Sudeten question. [Emphasis added]

Barely three weeks later His Majesty's Ambassador to Berlin commented again to Halifax:

> Yet even when I try to imagine that that which I feel in my heart to be inevitable and evolutional is neither, and when I think in terms of British interests only, regardless of right or wrong, I still feel that however repugnant, dangerous, and troublesome the result may be . . . the truest British interest is to come down on the side of the highest moral principle. And the only lastingly right moral principle is self-determination. The British Empire is built upon it [*sic*] and we cannot deny it without incalculable prejudice to *something which is of infinitely greater importance to the world than apprehensions of the German menace.* [Emphasis added]

Finally, for our purposes (the list of wonderfully perverse Henderson quotations could be extended indefinitely), in the summer of 1938 the ambassador in Berlin told Halifax:

> Personally I just sit and pray for one thing, namely, that Lord Runciman [who had been sent to conciliate the Czechs and Sudeten Germans] will live up to the role of impartial British liberal statesman. I cannot believe that he will allow himself to be influenced by ancient history *or even arguments about strategic frontier and economy* in preference to high moral principles. The great and courageous game which you and the Prime Minister are playing will be lost in my humble opinion if he [Runciman] does not come on this side of the higher principles [i.e., give the game away to the Germans] for which in fact the British Empire really stands. [Emphasis added]

THE question remains: did such attitudes reflect the general consensus within the Chamberlain government? Alas, to a large extent they did. Shortly after becoming Prime Minister, Chamberlain commented to Ivan Maisky, Soviet ambassador to London: "If only we could sit down at a table with the Germans and run through all their complaints and claims with a pencil, this would greatly relieve all tension." Lord Halifax, the Foreign Secretary, wondered aloud in a Cabinet meeting in summer 1938 whether it would be

> worthwhile to draft an appeal to the contending sides in Spain to stop the wars. Such an appeal would, of course, be based on grounds of humanity, Christianity, the peace of the world, and so forth. He feared that it would not be likely to succeed, but it would strengthen the moral position of His Majesty's government and might put them in a position to take helpful action later on.

But the true indicator of the Prime Minister's attitudes came in his actions. Assuming the leadership of Britain's defense and foreign policies in May 1937, Chamberlain reined in British rearmament (which was only then getting under way). His argument was that too much emphasis on armaments would ruin the economy and drive Britain into bankruptcy. Instead, Britain must husband its resources for humanitarian expenditures.

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Whatever the merits of the case for the impact of military spending on the civilian economy and welfare appropriations, there is a worse fate than national economic difficulties. It is called national defeat, something that had not been experienced in the Anglo-Saxon world since 1066 (if one excepts the American South in 1865—a precedent that, unfortunately, has had little impact on our historiography save in terms of romantic nonsense).

For Chamberlain, then, the foreign-policy agenda was simple: limit military spending (in Britain and, if possible, elsewhere), employ appeasement as a device to reduce international tension, and get on with the serious business of social reform in the British Isles.

Reinforcing Chamberlain's desire to appease Germany was not only a best-case analysis of Nazi foreign policy but a set of worst-case military appreciations done by the British Chiefs of Staff. Thus the British government's military advisers underlined the weaknesses of the Anglo-French strategic situation. Yet there was no crash effort at major rearmament. Rather, the British government aimed at a settlement with the Germans.

The problem was that Hitler did not want a settlement; he wanted a limited war with Czechoslovakia, a war in which he could pay back the Czechs for their impudence in ruling Germans since 1919 and their impertinent political attacks on the German ruling race in Hapsburg days. In June 1938 the German military began, in resolute, efficient, and competent fashion, the planning necessary for it to attack the Czechs in late September.

As those German preparations became steadily more obvious, Halifax speculated that Hitler's behavior stemmed from one of two explanations. Either the Fuehrer was mad and actively seeking war, or else, as Henderson had so tirelessly depicted him, he was a moderate surrounded by extremists whose military preparations, at least in Hitler's own eyes, were essentially defensive in nature.

Chamberlain, convinced that the latter explanation was the correct one, tried everything—from informal contacts, to his ambassador, to an "impartial mediator" (Lord Runciman)—only to meet with impassive silence from Berlin. But once embarked on appeasement he was not to be deflected from his course. By September, therefore, as German military preparations ominously rolled toward their conclusion, he decided to fly to Germany for a meeting with Hitler.

Before leaving Britain, he announced to the Cabinet that should Hitler demand a plebiscite in German-populated areas of Czechoslovakia, the West would have to accede. For, he said, "It would be difficult for the democratic countries to go to war to prevent the Sudeten Germans from saying what form of government they wanted." In conclusion he announced to his assembled ministers that the Czechs might be rather unwilling to give up their strategic frontiers; consequently, Britain would have to join in guaranteeing the integrity of a new, pared-down Czech state. Britain would, in short, guarantee the security of what its diplomacy was rendering indefensible.

CHAMBERLAIN'S visit to Berchtesgaden lived up to expectations. The Fuehrer wrung his hands and wept at the injustices of history and the unfairness of leaving Sudeten Germans under the ruthless heel of Czech oppression. He presented a picture of angry, rock-throwing Sudeten German youths seeking their rightful "national" and racial identity; and, of course, he delighted in recounting the various atrocities the Czech police and army had perpetrated on the innocent German minority.

After all this, Chamberlain returned to London, more than ever convinced that Czechoslovakia must surrender the Sudetenland to avoid a European war; he now had to persuade the Cabinet, and the French and the Czechs as well. That was no easy task, since the Cabinet doubted German trustworthiness, the French put up a good show of opposition, and the Czechs despaired at what signaled the end of national independence. But when the diplomatic dust had settled, the ducks had lined up.

Amazingly, no British diplomats or military advisers over the spring and summer of 1938 bothered to ask the essential strategic questions. What would be the consequences if the Western powers abandoned Czechoslovakia to the Third Reich with all its military equipment, one of the great armament factories of Europe (the Skoda Works, which in May 1945 would still be grinding out military equipment for the Wehrmacht), and its great financial and economic reserves (enough to keep the German war economy afloat over the summer and fall of 1939)? Would the strategic situation improve if the German army had another year to train? How would the fall of Czechoslovakia affect the strategic balance in Eastern Europe? These questions simply failed to appear in either the military or political considerations. As the historian Lewis Namier once pointed out about the British diplomatic documents:

> In the 1,250 large pages of the British pre-Munich documents, the question of Europe's political and strategic configuration after Czechoslovakia had been obliterated is nowhere dealt with: amazing mental reticence. . . . On the British side a blind wall is raised against the future by those vocal in the documents. All they know is that war must be averted.

Halifax even admitted on September 8 to his colleagues in the Cabinet that until the preceding day he had not known that the main Czech fortifications lay within the Sudeten German districts. Not until September 16 did Oliver Stanley,

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president of the Board of Trade (a Cabinet position), ask what the military balance might look like if Germany absorbed Czechoslovakia without a fight. The question provoked some scrambling to determine an answer, but no substantive analysis appeared.

In any event, it was too late in the game for inquiries on these basic strategic issues. Churchill, to be sure, had been providing such analyses, but to those in power he was an obnoxious troglodyte, tiresome in his constant refrain that Britain must prepare for war, and outmoded in his insistence that the balance of power and strategic frontiers still mattered. (In the House of Commons during the preceding spring someone had called out "How much is enough?" during a Churchill speech on air defense. The future Prime Minister replied that the question reminded him of a man who had received a telegram from Brazil informing him of the death of his mother-in-law and requesting instructions. "Embalm, cremate, bury at sea," the man had wired back, "take no chances." Whatever the sharpness of Churchill's wit, the point remains that the British government consciously and deliberately took chances with national defense in the hope that the Germans would behave.)

HAVING persuaded the French to run away from their ally and the Czechs to roll over and die, Chamberlain flew a second time to Germany to meet Hitler at Godesberg and serve up the Sudetenland. Hitler, who was after war pure and simple, tried to kill the negotiations. But still Chamberlain would not be deflected. Back from Godesberg he told the Cabinet that

> in his view Herr Hitler had certain standards. Herr Hitler had a narrow mind and was violently prejudiced on certain subjects; but he would not deliberately deceive a man whom he respected and with whom he had been in negotiation. . . . When Hitler announced that he meant to do something it was certain that he would do it.

Despite considerable restiveness in the country and even within the Cabinet, the Prime Minister yet again went to Germany (this time to Munich) within the week to finish his work. Before his departure he provided the British public a statement (later to become notorious) of his fundamental beliefs in the foreign-policy arena:

> How horrible, fantastic, incredible it is that we should be digging trenches and trying on gas masks here, because of a quarrel in a far away country between people of whom we know nothing! It seems still more impossible that a quarrel which has already been settled in principle should be the subject of a war. . . . However much we may sympathize with a small nation confronted by a big and powerful neighbor we cannot in all circumstances undertake to involve the whole British Empire in war simply on her account. If we have to fight it must be on larger issues than that. I am myself a man of peace to the depths of my soul. Armed conflict between nations is a nightmare to me.

And there at Munich, in company with the French Premier, Daladier, the sinister and pompous Italian dictator, Mussolini, and the Fuehrer himself, Chamberlain helped slice up the Czech republic past redemption. (Not that the Czechs were democratic sweethearts: they had indeed given the German minority short shrift and their treatment of minorities was reasonable only by the standards of Eastern Europe.) The Russians were not a factor, not just because Chamberlain and Daladier were anti-Communist, but because Stalin was too busy killing his officer corps and party elite to play a diplomatic role at this point. Even so, the British gave away nothing less than the strategic balance of Europe. Czechoslovakia may have been, as Chamberlain complained, a small nation "far away . . . of whom we know nothing," but it was nevertheless a nation whose geographic position held the key to the Danube basin and whose economic resources provided a vital bridge for German rearmament and for the Wehrmacht.

It is worth enumerating what the Western powers surrendered at Munich. The Czech army went out the window: Czech tanks would equip three of the ten German Panzer divisions that invaded France in May 1940, while four Waffen SS divisions, plus a further four of the army's infantry divisions, would possess Czech equipment. The remainder of the materiel acquired when they occupied rump Czechoslovakia in March 1939 the Germans sold to the Rumanians for oil and to the Yugoslavs and Hungarians for other raw materials. As important as all this was the fact that Czech industrial resources, raw materials, and financial strength played a major role in keeping the German war economy afloat to the end of 1939. Moreover, the Germans were now in a position to dominate Eastern Europe diplomatically, economically, and strategically.

For a short time in the 1960's and 1970's it became popular among historians to argue that Chamberlain had saved Britain from a devastating German air attack; German air-force records have made nonsense of such claims. As late as August 1938 half of the Luftwaffe's aircraft were out of commission, good for expensive static displays but not much else. A senior staff officer of the German Second Air Force, when informed that its units would have to attack Britain, noted in August 1938 that his command had the ability to inflict only "pinpricks" on the British Isles.

The Germans, then, did not possess the force structure, the munitions, or the training for a sustained attack on Britain in 1938. If war had broken out then, it would have been less costly and less destructive than the war that broke out in September 1939.

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YET on Chamberlain's return to London, the multitudes cheered when, from the balcony of the Prime Minister's residence, he breathlessly announced: "My good friends, this is the second time in our history that there has come back from Germany to Downing Street peace with honor." As Britons serenaded Chamberlain, only a few saw the gathering darkness. Churchill, of course, caught the full significance of Munich. The government, he remarked in a letter, had the choice between war and shame; it had chosen shame, it would get war. And before a sullen and frequently indignant House he declared:

> All is over. Silent, mournful, abandoned, broken Czechoslovakia recedes into the darkness. . . . Every position has been successively undermined and abandoned on specious and plausible excuses.
>
> I do not grudge our loyal, brave people, who were ready to do their duty no matter what the cost, who never flinched under the strain of last week, the natural, spontaneous outburst of joy and relief when they learned that the hard ordeal would no longer be required of them at the moment; but they should know the truth. . . . They should know that we have sustained a defeat without a war, the consequences of which will travel far with us along our road, when the whole equilibrium of Europe has been deranged, and that the terrible words have for the time being been pronounced against the Western democracies: "Thou art weighed in the balance and found wanting." And do not suppose that this is the end. This is only the beginning of the reckoning. This is only the first sip, the first foretaste of a bitter cup. . . .

Hitler's attitude toward the results of Munich was one of disbelief. As he told the Hungarian ambassador in January 1939:

> Amazing things had been achieved. "Do you think," he asked, "that I myself would have thought it possible half a year ago that Czechoslovakia would be served up to me, so to speak by her friends? I did not believe that England and France would go to war, but I was convinced that Czechoslovakia would have to be destroyed by war. The way that everything has happened is historically unique. We can offer each other heartfelt congratulations."

Munich was not the end of appeasement. The British government would shrug off the November 1938 "Crystal Night" pogrom, in which the windows of synagogues and Jewish-owned stores were smashed all over Germany, with worries that *any* British action might lead to a break with the Germans or that *any* British support for Germany's Jews might lead to an increase in anti-Semitism in Great Britain.

Despite its "triumph" at Munich, however, the Chamberlain government found itself under considerable pressure from two separate directions in the House. The first was from those who expected some concrete result from the Munich conference in terms of what was left of Czechoslovakia. The Germans obviously had no intention of guaranteeing the settlement; that meant a unilateral British guarantee. (How seriously the British government regarded this guarantee is suggested retroactively by a Labor question put in 1973 to the Foreign Secretary, a man who had formerly been Chamberlain's parliamentary private secretary, asking whether an undertaking the British were then thinking of making to the Israelis was the same as the one Chamberlain had given to the Czechs in October 1938. "No, this time it is meant," replied Lord Douglas-Home.)

The other pressure on the government came from a general sense even among Chamberlain's supporters that Britain's defense required more than the government's half-hearted and belated efforts. The government answered during the Munich debate that it had already embarked on a "great program of rearmament" when in fact it had no intention of changing its approach to rearmament. While German rearmament proceeded in nonstop fashion, the crew that had made Munich possible did nothing for the army, authorized construction of only twenty escort vessels and twelve minesweepers, dredged a few harbors, and reluctantly extended the contract dates for Spitfire and Hurricane production, thereby increasing the number of aircraft on order but not acting to make more of them available in the immediate future. (The production run of both aircraft had just begun.) In short, until March 1939, when the Germans removed the remaining ambiguities in most European minds, the British government talked rearmament, did little else, and got the worst of both worlds.

WELL, what does all this ancient history mean? A generation ago (1961), it suggested to those who had suffered through the consequences of Munich (and lived) that we should "pay any price, bear any burden" in the defense of liberty. That attitude disappeared rapidly in the late 1960's in the wreckage of American policy in Vietnam. Still unresolved, Vietnam lies like some great shadow over our consciousness, darkening and obscuring the increasingly foggy landscape. But through the fog we can detect a resurgence of the illusions of Munich.

Thus we receive a constant bombardment from the print and television media slanted toward the easy, soft assumptions of appeasement, steadily wearing on our collective consciousness. In one recent issue of the New York *Times* (March 27, 1988) alone, an article on the op-ed page by a leading American historian managed to denounce the Reagan administration's "*vengeful* [*sic*] military actions in Lebanon, Libya and Grenada"; to announce that the American government in the 1930's showed *great* prudence in not intervening in the Spanish Civil War, the Japanese war on China, and "the Italian bombardment of Ethiopia"[*sic*]; and finally, with great pride of schol-

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arship, to praise Thomas Jefferson's bizarre rules of engagement against the Tripoli pirates (soon modified by the realities of the world).

If this exercise in foolishness (by no less weighty a figure than Henry Steele Commager) were not enough, the *Times*'s own Karl E. Meyer managed on the same day to write nonexistent history on the editorial page in a signed piece entitled "The Mirage of Secure Borders"—a piece that made light of the territorial concerns of Israeli leaders. Bismarck, according to Meyer, was not able, by keeping the provinces of Alsace-Lorraine, to protect Germany from the vicious French enthusiasm for revenge (this, obviously, is why *Germany* invaded *France* in 1914). The French attempted to protect themselves from a renewed German effort to bring order to the West by building the Maginot Line in the 1920's, which, Meyer assures us, the Wehrmacht sliced through like a knife through butter (actually, they went around it through the Ardennes). And finally, in his effort to destroy history, Meyer brings us back to Munich. The parallel drawn by Henry Kissinger between the Czech situation in 1938 and Israel's today would, writes Meyer,

> be more persuasive if any Arab neighbor could be compared to Nazi Germany. In fact Israel is the regional superpower, and its military edge is greater now that Egypt is no longer a likely adversary [*sic*] and the Sinai no longer a security problem [*sic*]. What truly doomed Czechoslovakia was its isolation, and its abandonment by France and Britain. Does Mr. Kissinger really think that Prague would have prevailed over Hitler if only it had secure frontiers?

Within the week, the New York *Times* would carry the words from a poem by a prominent "moderate" in the PLO. Mahmoud Darwish ends his wonderfully "reasonable" argument with these lines to the Israelis:

> Get out of our land
> our continent, our sea
> our wheat, our salt, our sore
> our everything, and get out
> of the memory of memories.

But of course, he doesn't mean those words literally. And those rock-throwing youths who shout "this is our country and the Jews are our dogs," only want a little slice of Israeli territory for their homeland. Like us, they are only after "peace."

On the 50th anniversary of Munich, then, we have some serious thinking to do. But it will certainly not occur in the academic world: no conferences, no international meetings of scholars funded by foundations, no collection of articles to discuss the "meaning" of Munich. Why not? Perhaps the lessons might be too inimical to the fundamental tenets and beliefs of our world, too disturbing to our sense of how that world works. Perhaps silence is preferable precisely because the spirit of appeasement *is* alive and well. It stalks the nation crying that all men are reasonable (except ourselves), that the world's irrationality and anger are the result of our own actions, and that there is nothing worth fighting for. If we go on in this spirit, the only question will be not if we shall surrender our larger responsibilities in the world, but when.

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The ANC in Its Own Words

David Roberts, Jr.

According to its partisans in Congress and the media, the African National Congress (ANC)—which represents the principal source of armed opposition to the apartheid regime in South Africa—is fundamentally a pro-Western movement. Its anti-imperialist rhetoric is nothing more than a healthy assertion of African nationalism, and its alliance with the Soviet Union was forged from essentially the same motives that once prompted Roosevelt and Churchill to work with Stalin. And if the ANC has been driven to armed struggle by the long-term intransigence of the Pretoria regime, its purpose remains the establishment of civil liberties and democratic institutions for all South Africans.

Thus Thomas G. Karis assures us in the pages of *Foreign Affairs* that "neither the deep antagonism" of the ANC to the United States nor the assistance it receives from the Soviet Union "results in a pro-Soviet attitude on international issues." Indeed, *mirabile dictu*, given "U.S. and Western complicity in bolstering the South African regime," the ANC remains "historically, politically, and culturally more attuned to the United States and the West than it is to the Soviet bloc." As for the domestic front, Karis claims that the ANC's "goal is a democratic, nonracial, and undivided South Africa and its economic program is moderate and pragmatic."

The liberal popular press invariably concurs with Karis's observations. A recent article in the New York *Times* by John D. Battersby is only one of hundreds to note that the ANC "advocates a nonracial democracy," while a typical piece by *Newsweek*'s Richard Manning affirms that the ANC and its legal surrogate, the United Democratic Front (UDF), want "a milder form of socialism and a democratic, pluralistic political system."

Roughly the same view prevails among liberals on Capitol Hill, who habitually treat the pronouncements of ANC leaders with something akin to reverence. For example, in the course of a recent House Foreign Affairs subcommittee hearing, Congressmen Howard Wolpe and Stephen Solarz cited the authority of Nelson Mandela, the imprisoned founder of the ANC's military wing, and Oliver Tambo, its current president, as a warrant for their own support of near-total sanctions against South Africa.

Yet this liberal view can only be sustained by ignoring the immense body of hard evidence proving that the ANC is driven by a commitment to Leninist ideology that goes far beyond mere rhetoric and by political intentions that are concomitantly totalitarian. Not only does this material—consisting of internal documents as well as radio broadcasts, speeches, articles, and press interviews—establish that the ANC is pro-Soviet, anti-Western, and anti-democratic; it also strongly suggests that these attitudes are part of a deeply rooted world view with no logical dependence on the injustices of South Africa's peculiar institution, or on American and Western policy toward the Pretoria regime.

The evidence in question can be traced all the way back to the youthful writings of Mandela, but a more recent starting point might be the lengthy address delivered by Oliver Tambo before the Second Consultative Conference of the ANC, held in Kabwe, Zambia, in June 1985. In that speech Tambo limned a more or less inevitable historical process working toward the liberation of mankind from "the forces of imperialism and reaction" and effecting "the progressive transformation of the world, including our own region of Southern Africa." Tambo identified the "progressive forces" actively pursuing world transformation as consisting of the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries, the progressive governments and liberation movements of the underdeveloped world, and "the democratic movements within the imperialist countries."

On numerous occasions ANC leaders have emphasized the seamless character of this struggle. Speaking before a 1979 meeting of the nonaligned nations in Havana, Tambo averred that "from their own experiences the imperialist powers have learned that a victory in any part of the world becomes not only a triumph for all peoples fighting to remove the shackles of imperialist domination, but also a material factor in the creation of fresh possibilities for fresh successes against imperialist hegemony everywhere."

A year later, before a Sofia gathering sponsored

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by the World Peace Council, Tambo declared that "the historic victory of the Vietnamese people against the occupation forces of the United States and their puppets has a significance which goes beyond the fact that today Vietnam is free and united," because it also "confirmed that the international balance of power had shifted irrevocably in favor of the forces of national independence and social progress, whatever reverses these forces might suffer here and there." Moreover, the Communist victory in Vietnam "proved to the forces of reaction that the socialist community of nations, the rest of progressive mankind, and the world anti-imperialist movement had sufficient political will and strength to resist the most desperate machinations of these forces of reaction."

Finally, in his Kabwe address of 1985, Tambo linked the victory of progressive forces in Indochina to the ANC's own forthcoming triumph over imperialism, affirming that the collapse of U.S. "policy in the battlefields of Indochina and in the streets of the USA itself created increased possibilities for an accelerated transformation of the world, including our own region of Southern Africa."

In short, the struggle for the liberation of South Africa makes up but one part of a much greater conflict. The ANC views the "liberation" of Cuba, Vietnam, Cambodia, East Timor, Palestine, El Salvador, Puerto Rico, and Iran, as well as the Soviet Union's rescue of "the democratic, anti-feudal revolution in Afghanistan," as collectively forming a necessary precondition for its own victory. Likewise, it views the liberation of South Africa by the "people's vanguard movement" as an important element in the planetary triumph of socialism. That is why Francis Meli, the East German-educated editor of the ANC monthly *Sechaba,* could tell his comrades in the Youth League of the East German Communist party that "when you give solidarity to us, you are not helping some needy, poor blacks in the jungles of Africa, you are promoting your own struggle in your own country,. . . because the liberation of South Africa will mean the weakening of international imperialism."

THE anti-Americanism of this scheme is deeply rooted in ANC thinking. Indeed, as early as 1953, Nelson Mandela accused the United States of genocide in Korea and spoke of "the efforts of imperialist America and her satellites to drag the world into the rule of the napalm, hydrogen, and cobalt bombs where millions of people will be wiped out to satisfy the criminal and greedy appetites of the imperial powers." Writing five years later, Mandela portrayed the Marshall Plan as a successful U.S. plot for "gaining control of the economies of European countries and reducing them to a position analogous to that of dependencies." Mandela described NATO as "an aggressive military bloc" formed to further "American plans for world conquest." He also saw the formation of a Bureau of African Affairs in the State Department and the visit of a few American politicians and industrialists to the continent as positive proof that "American imperialism is all the more dangerous because . . . it comes to Africa elaborately disguised." Mandela was not fooled by America's discarding "most of the weapons of the old type of imperialism," by its claim "to repudiate force and violence." The U.S. was all the more exploitative and insidious for that reason.

Nothing has changed since the days when Mandela was at large. To Oliver Tambo, so often alleged to be a "moderate," the U.S. is the successor to Nazi Germany as "the spearhead of international reaction." NATO remains an "aggressive military alliance" and part of the American conspiracy "to turn many countries of Western Europe into vassals of the United States." "The intentions of the imperialists," led by the U.S., "to impose their will on the world by force of arms" have been foiled in the thirty-five years since World War II, but only "thanks to the strength of the socialist countries, especially the Soviet Union, and the vigilance of the world peace movement." U.S. power is the mainstay of "the privileged status of the imperial powers in the world economy, . . . resulting in the continued and accelerated impoverishment of our [Third World] peoples and the all-around regression of our countries," while ensuring "the multinational corporations unique and stupendous profits."

All this, it should perhaps be emphasized, was said not about the U.S. under Ronald Reagan but during the administration of Jimmy Carter. For, according to Tambo, Carter had concluded that "the only way to fashion an international order that accommodates the interests of imperialism, and especially U.S. imperialism, is openly to resort to the threat or use of force to an extent equal or surpassing that achieved at the height of the cold war."

Nor does the ANC have anything good to say for the domestic order of the United States. Only in the narrowest sense, if at all, does America qualify in ANC eyes as a democracy. Tambo maintains that the U.S. is governed not by its people but by a "ruling class," albeit one that has its "saner circles," of which Senator Edward Kennedy is "a representative." And Alfred Nzo, the ANC's Secretary-General, who has traveled widely in the United States, assured his East German friends in 1983, at the centennial ceremony of the death of Karl Marx, that the policies of the Reagan administration "have forced the United States working class to depend on charitable soup kitchens for its sustenance."

CONVERSELY, the Soviet Union is as admirable as the U.S. is evil. To Mandela's wife Winnie, "the Land of the Soviets"

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is still nothing less than "the genuine friend and ally of all oppressed peoples fighting the dark forces of world reaction," "a torchbearer for all our hopes and aspirations," "an example to us in our struggle for freedom, a model of loyalty to internationalist duty," and the country where "genuine power of the people has been transformed from dreams into reality." In similar fashion, Alfred Nzo, who supposedly represents the centrists within the ANC, assured the 27th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1986 that the ANC shares "the pride of the multinational Soviet people in the all-around achievements of your socialist state, since these contribute to still further strengthening your country, which is the bulwark of peace, security, and happiness for all mankind."

Indeed, the ANC has adhered more closely to the Soviet line than some West European Communist parties, consistently supporting every major Soviet policy and initiative, including the invasions of Czechoslovakia and Afghanistan. Today the ANC leadership condemns Solidarity as a reactionary force and Oliver Tambo attributes "the complicated situation that arose in Poland" to "a determined effort" on the part of the Reagan administration "to roll back socialism, to reverse the victories of the national-liberation movement, and to force the peoples of the world to succumb to imperialism." "The offensive against democratic Afghanistan" is part of the same conspiracy.

Back in 1962, Nelson Mandela wrote that applying "the great qualities of revolutionary geniuses like Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin" would make of South Africa a land of peace, freedom, and plenty:

> Under a Communist party government, South Africa will become a land of milk and honey. Political, economic, and social rights will cease to be enjoyed by whites only. They will be shared equally by whites and non-whites. There will be enough land and houses for all. There will be no unemployment, starvation, and disease. Workers will earn decent wages; transport will be cheap and education free. There will be no pass laws, no influx controls, no police raids for passes and poll tax, and Africans, Europeans, Coloureds, and Indians will live in racial peace and perfect harmony.

It is in the light of these sentiments that the ANC's relations with the rest of Africa today are to be understood.

As it happens, and contrary to a widespread belief, some African states have performed rather well since independence: Botswana has prospered and is classified by Freedom House as a free country, although just barely. Senegal and Gambia almost make the list of free countries, and their economies have not fared too badly. Cameroon has made substantial economic progress, and Félix Houphouët-Boigny has pulled off an economic miracle in the Ivory Coast, while ruling with a relatively light hand.

It is not, however, from these countries that the ANC draws its inspiration for the future of South Africa. Rather it is from the most brutal, incompetent, famine-creating, and freedom-loathing one-party regimes on the continent. The ANC is on singularly cordial terms with the genocidal Mengistu regime in Ethiopia, which plays host to the ANC's Radio Freedom, and with Julius Nyerere's Tanzania, where the ANC founded its two party colleges, both of which practice Tanzanian-style indoctrination. Both the ANC's political offices and the headquarters of its military wing, *Umkhonto we Sizwe* (Zulu for "Spear of the Nation" and commonly abbreviated MK), are in Zambia, and it repays this hospitality by dismissing its host country's rapid economic decline under Kenneth Kaunda's increasingly collectivist policies as the consequence of "capitalist exploitation" and "colonialism."

BUT the ANC has chosen to associate itself most intimately of all with the overtly Leninist states of Angola and Mozambique, governments which have given their respective peoples nothing but economic collapse, famine, and a totalitarian regimen leavened only by corruption and incompetence. Both Angola's ruling MPLA and Mozambique's Frelimo have reduced the courts, the press, the trade unions, the economy, and, in brief, the whole of civil society to mere adjuncts of themselves. Neither regime tolerates the slightest dissent or even neutrality, and both administer justice through revolutionary tribunals and keep thousands of political prisoners in some of the world's most squalid prisons and "reeducation" camps. Both nations were agriculturally self-sufficient when they became independent in 1975, and both have since seen their agricultural output diminish by at least half. And both regimes are kept in power by thousands of foreign troops and by vast amounts of Soviet military aid.

In Maputo, the capital of Mozambique, writes Carmen Bader of the French weekly *L'Express:*

> Economic activity has fallen by 20 percent in a single year. Everything is lacking: coffee, oil, flour, meat, motor fuel, spare parts. Last summer ration cards became worthless for lack of merchandise. To feed oneself has become an obsession, unless you can shop, with hard currency—dollars or South African rands—in the "*loja franca*," the store reserved for foreigners, which sells products of which 90 percent come from execrated South Africa. A functionary earning three times the minimum wage asked me, with great embarrassment, to sell him a small piece of soap. For the dollar is worth, here, forty times the official exchange rate.

In Luanda, the capital of Angola, conditions

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are similar. According to a 1983 book by David Lamb of the Los Angeles *Times:*

> The mosaic sidewalks have cracked, exposing large gaps of stones and dirt, and garbage fills the streets. The high-rise apartments are occupied by squatters; the corridors reek of urine, and laundry hangs from the balcony railings. Rats scurry through the deserted restaurants, torn and filthy awnings hang limply in the stifling afternoon heat. The parks are overgrown, rusting frames of wrecked cars litter the alleys, and promptly at 5 A.M., when the curfew ends, women start queuing for a loaf of bread or a can of powdered milk imported from Brazil. By noon, the lines stretch for blocks. . . .
>
> Block after block of stores were closed, their windows broken and boarded up. Neon signs flashed mysteriously above IBM, Sony, and Singer showrooms that had been empty for years. Hotel employees snoozed at reception counters, and government workers slouched behind desks that were barren of telephones, typewriters, pencils, or paper. Elevators were stuck where they had jammed two or three years earlier, and air conditioners coughed and sputtered and threw out blasts of hot air.
>
> In my $40-a-day hotel room a sign advised: "The great difficulty we are finding in replacing lost or deteriorated objects forces us to make this special request. Should you need a towel, please request same at the porter's desk." But the hotel had no porter, no porter's desk, no running water, no food in the dining room except soup and bread.*

Yet Oliver Tambo sees in all this only two sterling examples of "popular power" in action. The "advances made in Angola and Mozambique toward complete national and social emancipation" parallel and foreshadow the ANC's own program "to dismantle the colonial economic structure and install a new socioeconomic order in the region," thereby putting "an end to the continued plunder of our region by international capital." Far from serving as cautionary examples, Frelimo and the MPLA have shown the way to the ANC and other liberation movements toward the emancipation of the entire region:

> When the NEC [National Executive Committee of the ANC] considered the implications of the accession to power of the Frelimo and the MPLA in their respective countries, it concluded that there has emerged in Southern Africa a new kind of state power. Fundamentally new social relations were emerging. For the peoples of Southern Africa, Mozambique and Angola were the latest examples demonstrating that exploitative relations are but a transitional phase in the development of human society.

It is, exclaims Chris Hani, now chief of staff of MK, the ANC's military wing, because the entirely positive examples of Angola and Mozambique spell "doom to the sort of control and domination that imperialist countries exercised in our continent," that imperialism has resorted to "the destabilization process, organization of bandit groups, the financing and equipping of . . . groups like UNITA and the MNR to prevent, to frustrate . . . real independence in the true sense [of] political and economic independence."

It is for this reason also, Hani adds, that imperialism seeks to weaken "the liberation alliance in our country" between the ANC and the South African Communist party, and the alliance between the ANC and the Soviet Union, both of which enable the ANC to remain steadfastly committed to the proposition that "the wealth of our country, the mines of our country, the factories and land of our country will be given back to the people from which they were stolen," or at least to their vanguard.

THE importance that Chris Hani and other ANC leaders assign to the alliance with the South African Communist party (SACP) does, however, bring up one argument commonly deployed against the ANC that deserves to be dismissed as specious and irrelevant. It is not true that the ANC is being "manipulated" by a small group of white Communists controlled from Moscow. In no intelligible sense is the ANC a front for the SACP, and to claim so is to miss a great deal of the point.

The ANC was originally a black African movement committed to the peaceful acquisition of civil and in time political rights by South African blacks, yet it gradually came under the domination of (largely black) Leninist-minded leaders, in part through a strategy of infiltration and active courtship by Moscow, but mostly through a more or less natural process of political osmosis. In fact, a large share of the credit for the Leninization of the ANC goes to Pretoria, which in the 50's put the moderate ANC president, Chief Albert N. Luthuli, under the ban, enabling Mandela, Tambo, Walter Sisulu, J.B. Marks, Joe Slovo, and others to acquire leadership of the movement and steer it hard Left.

The South African Department of National Security has put the number of Communists elected to the ANC's 30-member National Executive Committee in 1985 at 19, and this estimate is essentially confirmed by the CIA documents read into the *Congressional Record* (August 14, 1986) by Senator Jesse Helms. But Thomas G. Karis believes that there are only three confirmable Communists on the NEC. Actually it is a matter of small consequence whether Oliver Tambo, for example, is or is not an SACP member (he is, in

* *The Africans* (Random House, 1983). David Lamb is a keen observer of African conditions, but he believes that the MPLA and like-minded regimes can be weaned away from their ideology, once they understand the catastrophic effects of collectivism for the ordinary people of Africa; accordingly he would have us offer the MPLA regime the friendship of the United States, and attempt "to earn understanding from the African National Congress."

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any case, a member of the Soviet-controlled World Peace Council). This question is about as vital as the same question once was with Castro, the Sandinista *comandantes,* Colonel Mengistu, or the leadership of Frelimo and the MPLA, all of whom founded the movements which (whatever they might have been or pretended to be at the beginning) were to *become* the ruling Communist parties of their respective countries. The important point is that the current ANC leadership—*all* of it—has accepted the terminology, definitions, political program, tactics, and the entire load of ideological baggage that make up the essence of Leninism.

The same holds true for the ANC cadre corps. The political commissars of MK are sent to the Soviet Union or its satellites for ideological training and this indoctrination is passed on to every MK fighter and ANC cadre as a condition of membership. If they accept the ideology, it is of little significance whether they then join the SACP. For example, former ANC cadre Ephraim Mfalipitsa recalls being told that "after the national revolution, there will be what they call a socialist revolution," and that "this socialist revolution will commence the dictatorship of the proletariat."

But if the idea of SACP manipulation of the ANC is something of a pseudo-issue, the close ideological affinity, sense of mutual admiration, and spirit of hearty comradeship that exist between the two reflect how much they have in common. The ANC magazine *Sechaba* likens the SACP and ANC to "two hands of the same body," but perhaps the relationship between them is best explained in the theological language of the 5th-century Council of Chalcedon: they coexist in a state of perfect hypostatic union, retaining their separate organizational natures but sharing a single will. The tighter organizational structure of the SACP fits it better for certain clandestine tasks, but the ANC is by no means a junior partner in this most cordial of alliances. "The political vanguard of the working class is the CP and the vanguard of the national liberation movement is the ANC" (Radio Freedom, August 23, 1986). No relationship could be more innately harmonious.

EVEN more significant are the contempt and hatred that the ANC consistently expresses for every political current in South Africa aside from itself, the SACP, and their affiliated organizations, and its insistence that "all South African patriots . . . must take their place in the revolution under the banner of the ANC."

Although the ANC has remained silent or elusive on the merits of a one-party state as opposed to the multiparty alternative, it should be apparent by now that the former option is at the very least consonant with the ANC's concept of democracy.

Of course, the ANC's Freedom Charter of 1955 guarantees free speech and association, as the ANC understands those terms. Yet it also provides that "all national groups shall be protected by law against insults to race and national pride," which requires in turn that "the preaching and practice of national, race, or color discrimination or contempt shall be a punishable crime." The ANC's National Executive Committee reaffirmed this commitment in January 1987, promising to ban all organized propagation of "fascism, racism, and ethnicity" in liberated South Africa. An ANC spokesman said much the same thing when he wrote to the New York *Times* to explain why the ANC had no use for "the democracy that is practiced in the United States":

> That is, we are not interested in a democracy that protects the Ku Klux Klan, Nazi parties, white citizens' councils, etc. Certainly, in our future free South Africa, the laws protecting freedom of speech and association will *not* include pro-apartheid propaganda or the *broederbond.* For this, our people need make no apologies.

This rationale is reminiscent of an essay in which the late historian E.H. Carr favorably contrasted the refusal of "Soviet democracy" to tolerate fascism with the "illogical" Anglo-American conviction that "democracy tolerates even dissentients hostile to itself." It is instructive to note that the ANC not only holds exactly the same view as Carr's of the Soviet Union but also, in excluding racism from the pale of toleration, defines this term as broadly as Carr once defined fascism. As the ANC sees things, everyone in South Africa outside its own political ambit is either a racist or a racist stooge.

Thus Oliver Tambo has declared that "a better life in our country" depends not only on "the destruction of the white minority dictatorship," but also of "their stooges, the Buthelezis, the Mangopes, the Matanzimas, the Rajbansis, and all other sell-outs who have sold their birthright for a mess of pottage," referring, respectively, to the political leaders of kwaZulu, Bophuthatswana, Transkei, and the president of the South African Indian Council. In particular Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi (who has been fighting apartheid all his life, who has refused to allow Pretoria to impose a phony independence on kwaZulu, and who even calls for the unbanning of the ANC) is regularly denounced by the ANC as "the stooge and puppet groomed by the West and the Pretoria regime." His "pro-investment and free-enterprise system" activities are "aimed at destroying the trade-union movement and entrenching further exploitation of the toiling masses," and his political movement, Inkatha, with well over a million dues-paying members, is "terrorist."

The anti-apartheid Progressive Federal party (PFP), characterized by the ANC as "the so-called opposition in the racist parliament," does not seem worthy of survival in a liberated South

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Africa, either, as it is "happy to justify the violence of the apartheid system in the name of law and order." The Indaba project for a nonracial state in the Natal is a plot "to stop the struggle and create the possibility for the fascist Botha, Buthelezi, and Slabbert . . . to impose a reformist so-called solution on our people, which would leave the apartheid system intact." The PFP and the South African business sector "want to reform the apartheid system in such a way that the end result is a system which secures their business but is minus racial discrimination." But "apartheid . . . minus racial discrimination" is still apartheid.

The notion of limiting government power and protecting the rights of minorities is utterly foreign to the ANC. The insistence of white liberals on protecting minority rights is symptomatic of "the insanity of the white man," declares Winnie Mandela to the liberal Johannesburg *Star*. "Who are they to prescribe the quantity of power we, the majority of the land, want?" After all, "power belongs to the people," and more precisely, to "those with black skin, black hands—they will determine how that power is shared." Accordingly, the only subject that the ANC is willing to discuss with anyone else in South Africa is "the mechanics of handing over power to the victorious masses led by their vanguard movement," and that means the unconditional surrender of undisputed and untrammeled power over all of South African civil society to the ANC.

AROUND the turn of the century the French socialist philosopher Jean Jaurès warned that "if the politicians and administrators who already control the nation's diplomacy and armed forces were also given authority over the whole labor force, and if they appoint managers at all levels as they now appoint army officers, this would confer on a handful of men such power as Asian despots never dreamed of—for they controlled only the surface of public life and not the economies of their countries." In his autobiography, *Out of Step*, Sidney Hook laments the failure of the socialists of his youth to "take more seriously the problems of safeguarding human rights from the aggression of the state—particularly a state that held the reins of economic as well as political power in its hands." Today this danger is of no concern at all to the Marxist-Leninist/Third Worldist socialists of the ANC, who equate freedom, progress, and human happiness with the nationalization of the economy, and for whom power to the state means power to the people, providing only that the state is in the hands of the people's vanguard.

Ideas like worker ownership, autogestion, and co-determination are not for the ANC. The Freedom Charter promises that "the mineral wealth beneath the soil, the banks, and monopoly industry shall be transferred to the people as a whole." Oliver Tambo insists, as part of the ANC's minimal program, on reclaiming for the African majority the land stolen from them by "the racist white farmers," and warns that "the land question must be resolved, if need be, the hard way." He is not impressed by the exceptional efficiency of these farms under racist management, and he apparently does not know that the farms of the Western Cape were established before the Boer ever met the Bantu. (Even the farms founded during the Great Trek were established immediately after the Natal, the Orange Free State, and large parts of the Transvaal had been completely depopulated by the *Mfecane* and the depredations of the Zulu king, Shaka, both man-made disasters in which whites took no part.)

In fact, the ANC intends to run the agricultural sector itself and has trained a number of cadres for that purpose. Some idea of what farming would be like in the People's Republic of South Africa can be gleaned from a look at the Chongela estate, the ANC's 2,900-hectare communal farm 40 kilometers north of Lusaka in Zambia, which was purchased for the ANC and endowed with the latest equipment by the Norwegian and Swedish governments. This enterprise sustains large financial losses each year, which have to be made up by the ANC's Scandinavian patrons, and yet the estate's labor force is exploited without mercy, living in unserviced hovels on the Zambian minimum wage of 84 cents a day.

Aaron Mafaje, Chongela's East German-trained manager, remains undaunted by experience. When asked what kind of system the ANC proposes for rural South Africa, he replied: "I don't think I would encourage individual ownership. I think state farms will serve the masses." So the ANC can be relied on to pursue the same policies that have brought famine to other African countries, and the West will of course be held responsible by the revolutionary regime and be called upon to alleviate the recurrent crises.

The ANC realizes the dangers entailed in leaving the non-nationalized sector (the boutiques? the restaurants? the bicycle-repair shops? the ten-acre plots?) too much independence. The Freedom Charter accordingly demands that the rest of the economy "shall be controlled," not just regulated, "to assist the well-being of the people."

To help all this along, a 1982 document produced by the ANC's Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College calls for "the formulation of a new educational system," committed to abolishing "the artificial separation of education from politics, and especially the tendency which seeks to place greater emphasis on the academic at the expense of the political." Politically correct education is to play a vital role in realizing and consolidating the ANC's political program "in the post-liberation phase," which is described as follows:

> Experiences of struggling peoples the world over (Vietnam, Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Afghanistan, Nicaragua) have shown that a

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people's struggle for independence and freedom does not end with the attainment of political power. Economic power must pass into the hands of the people!

In the initial stage of the post-liberation phase of our revolution, ours shall be a struggle at the same time against ignorance, backwardness and poverty, and the forces of reaction, who will make every attempt to turn back the wheel of progress and history. Ours shall be to consolidate peoples' power!

LAST and perhaps least, there is the ANC policy on violence and "necklacing" (which involves burning people to death by putting a gasoline-soaked tire around their necks and setting it on fire). Given the injustices of the status quo, it is difficult to blame the ANC in all cases for resorting to violence and sabotage, assuming, of course, honorable intentions for the post-revolutionary order. One should also expect a large number of atrocities from even the most well-intentioned revolutionary guerrilla force. But the violence practiced by the ANC and MK extends well beyond these expectations.

The ANC has planted bombs in places like supermarkets, public beaches, and crowded streets, with no possible military or economic importance, and boasted about it afterward over Radio Freedom. Contrary to what Zimbabwean Prime Minister Robert Mugabe alleges in a recent issue of *Foreign Affairs,* Winnie Mandela's endorsement of necklacing as an agent of liberation at the close of her notorious Munsieville speech represents nothing new for the ANC. The practice has been regularly extolled in *Sechaba,* over Radio Freedom, and by sundry ANC spokesmen. For example, *Sechaba* revels in the thought of "collaborators and informers" living in "fear of petrol bombs being hurled at their homes and reducing them to rack and ruin, or . . . petrol dousing their treacherous bodies which we set alight, and burn to a charred, despicable mass."

But more ominous than the ghastly act of necklacing itself is that the choice of victims often suggests a totalitarian mindset on the part of the perpetrators. The ANC-directed, or at least ANC-inspired, "comrades" have burned people to death merely for not participating in the boycott of a white store or for failing to attend an ANC-sanctioned funeral. This suggests that the ANC is not prepared to tolerate neutrals or non-combatants.

In spite of all this, the ANC today is honored in the West in ways ranging from shanties on American college campuses, to the bronze statue of Nelson Mandela unveiled in London by Neil Kinnock, head of the British Labor party, to the film hagiography produced by HBO. Meanwhile, pro-Western black South African democrats, such as Buthelezi and Bishop Isaac Mokoena, are treated by large segments of Western opinion exactly as the ANC would have them treated.

The fact that the ANC has been lionized by much of the prestige press and by many liberal politicians no doubt makes confronting its totalitarian character difficult and rancorous. But perhaps those American pundits and politicians who currently extol the intelligence and erudition of Nelson Mandela and Oliver Tambo should be reminded of how George McGovern once touted the Khmer Rouge as "some of the best educated, most able intellectuals in Cambodia."

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Will Herberg in Retrospect

David G. Dalin

VERY few people today remember who Will Herberg was. If his name is recognized at all, it is probably as the author of *Protestant-Catholic-Jew* (1955), a popular evocation of America's "triple melting pot" whose thesis has become a part of the sociological language of our time. Yet Herberg, who died eleven years ago, was undeniably one of the most interesting Jewish intellectuals of the last half-century, and one, moreover, whose journey from Marxism to Judaism, and from the political Left to the political Right, resonates with peculiar aptness today. The recent publication of Harry J. Ausmus's book-length study of Herberg's writings* affords an opportunity to ponder the life and thought of this once better-known figure.

Herberg was born in 1901, in the same Russian village in which his father had been born before him. By the time his family arrived in the United States, in 1904, Herberg's parents, whom he would later describe as "passionate atheists," were already committed to the faith that mankind's salvation lay in socialism. Curiously, both his father, who died when Herberg was ten, and his mother held the American public-school system in "contempt." Although he attended Brooklyn's Public School 72 and Boys High, Herberg's real education took place at his parents' kitchen table. A precocious and versatile student, by the time he was a teen-ager Herberg had learned Greek, Latin, French, German, and Russian. Graduating from high school in 1918, he later attended CCNY and Columbia University, where he studied philosophy and history, apparently without ever completing the course work for an academic degree.

Herberg inherited and acted upon his parents' commitments. Entering the Communist movement while still a teen-ager, he subsequently brought to radical politics a theoretical erudition that, through his contributions to left-wing journals in the 20's and early 30's, helped to elevate the intellectual standards of American Marxism. While less prolific than Max Eastman or the novelist John Dos Passos, Herberg was perhaps the most "catholic" of Marxist polemicists, writing regularly on an amazingly diverse number of topics, from Edmund Wilson's views of proletarian literature, to Sidney Hook's explication of Marx on revolution, to the relationship between Freudian psychoanalysis and Communist thought.

Herberg's attachment to Communism was no mere affectation; so earnestly did he embrace the Marxist "faith" that, as Ausmus points out, he even sought to square it with Einstein's theory of relativity. Indeed, perhaps his boldest contribution to the radical thought of the period lay in his effort to reconcile Marxism with, on the one hand, the new Einsteinian cosmology, which had gone virtually unnoticed among radical writers in America, and, on the other hand, with Freudianism. For Herberg, both Marxism and the theory of relativity were "scientifically true," and as for Freudianism he wrote in the 30's that the "world of socialism—to which nothing human is alien and which cherishes every genuine manifestation of the human spirit—lays a wreath of homage on the grave of Sigmund Freud."

In the 1920's Herberg's allegiances within the Communist movement lay with the group headed by Jay Lovestone, followers and supporters of Bukharin, who were eventually to be ousted from the party by Stalin in 1929. At that point Herberg became a staff member and editor of the Lovestonite paper, *Workers Age*, many of whose contributors would later become bitter anti-Stalinists. As the 1930's progressed, however, Herberg found himself increasingly disenchanted not just with the party but with Marxism itself. There were the usual milestones along the path: the Stalinist purges, the Communist betrayal of the Popular Front during the Spanish Civil War, the Russian invasion of Finland, and especially the Stalin-Hitler nonaggression pact of 1939. For Herberg, as for many of his generation, this last dispelled

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**Will Herberg: From Right to Right,* by Harry J. Ausmus, Foreword by Martin E. Marty, University of North Carolina Press, 275 pp., $29.95.

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any remaining belief that "only a socialist government can defeat totalitarianism."

But his final break with orthodox Marxism represented more than just a change in political loyalties. As he would confess years later, Marxism had been, to him and to others like him, "a religion, an ethic, and a theology; a vast all-embracing doctrine of man and the universe, a passionate faith with meaning." Not that Herberg was about to abandon the values that had first attracted him to revolutionary activity. Rather, "My discovery was that I could no longer find basis and support for these ideals in the materialistic religion of Marxism. . . ." Something else was wanted to replace the failed god of Marxism and to fill the inner spiritual void which had left Herberg "deprived of the commitment and understanding that alone made life livable." It was then he chanced to read Reinhold Niebuhr's *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, a book that was profoundly to change the course of his life.

More than any other American thinker of the 1930's and 1940's, Niebuhr related theology to politics through a realistic assessment of human nature that seemed, and not just to Will Herberg alone, inescapably relevant in a time of the breakdown of the Communist faith. In the writings of Niebuhr, Herberg discovered a compelling theological position from which to derive his own post-Marxist, but still essentially liberal, faith. "Humanly speaking," he would later write, Niebuhr's work "converted me, for in some manner I cannot describe, I felt my whole being, and not merely my thinking, shifted to a new center. . . . What impressed me most profoundly was the paradoxical combination of realism and radicalism that Niebuhr's 'prophetic' faith made possible. . . . Here, in short, was a 'social idealism' without illusions, in comparison with which even the most 'advanced' Marxism appeared confused, inconsistent, and hopelessly illusion-ridden."

So thoroughly did Herberg fall under the spell of Niebuhr's thought that by the time he met him personally—Niebuhr was then teaching at Union Theological Seminary in New York—he was contemplating becoming a Christian. After several discussions with Niebuhr, Herberg did in fact declare his intention to convert, but Niebuhr counseled him instead to explore his own religious tradition first, and directed him across the street to the Jewish Theological Seminary. There, Herberg undertook instruction in Hebrew and Jewish thought.

Herberg was inspired by what he learned. In Judaism he found, after years of searching, a faith that encouraged social action without falling into the trap of utopianism—and also, more importantly, a religious edifice that satisfied his own hunger for orthodoxy. Throughout the 1940's, while earning a living as the educational director of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, Herberg met regularly with rabbis and students at the Seminary and at his own home, developing and explicating his emerging theology of Judaism. "In those early days," says one of those students, "when the naturalistic theology so brilliantly expounded by Professor Mordecai Kaplan was the main intellectual influence in Jewish religious circles, we were fascinated by Herberg's espousal of the orthodox ideas of a supernatural God, Messiah, and Torah, expounded with fervor and yet interpreted in a new way."

Out of these intellectual encounters, and out of several essays published in COMMENTARY and elsewhere in the late 1940's, came Herberg's first major work, *Judaism and Modern Man*, an interpretation of Judaism in the light of existentialist philosophy which appeared in 1951 and was highly praised by Jewish scholars. (Niebuhr himself believed that the book "may well become a milestone in the religious thought of America.") Although *Judaism and Modern Man* made Herberg's reputation as a theologian, it did not lead to the academic position that he then actively sought for himself. After 1948, when his duties with the ILGWU diminished, he offered courses on a part-time basis at the New School for Social Research, served briefly as the editor of the new quarterly journal *Judaism*, but earned much of his income from free-lance articles and reviews and from lectures on college campuses and to synagogue and church groups far and wide. At least some of his energies were also devoted to the research and writing of *Protestant-Catholic-Jew* which, upon its publication in 1955, brought Herberg the recognition he had long sought and a full-time academic appointment at Drew University, a Methodist institution in New Jersey, where he would teach until his retirement in 1976.

When Herberg published *Judaism and Modern Man*, he still considered himself very much a liberal, albeit of the fervently anti-Communist variety. Throughout the first half of the 1950's he continued to publish regularly in the *New Republic*, *New Leader*, COMMENTARY, and *Christian Century*. As the decade wore on, however, Herberg began increasingly to identify himself with political conservatism. He became part of that remarkable group of ex-Communists and ex-Trotskyists around William F. Buckley, Jr.'s *National Review*, a group that included James Burnham, Willmoore Kendall, Frank Meyer, Freda Utley, Max Eastman, and Whittaker Chambers. As religion editor of *National Review*, and as a frequent contributor to other conservative journals like *Intercollegiate Review* and *Modern Age*, Herberg spent the ensuing years calling repeatedly for a reassessment of the prevailing liberal consensus

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concerning church-state separation, and more generally, for a positive role for religion in American life.

II

By the time of his death in March 1977, Will Herberg was nowhere near so well known as he had been fifteen or twenty years earlier. The grip over American intellectual life that the Left had achieved in the 60's was only just beginning to show perceptible signs of loosening, while the neoconservative movement, which Herberg (despite his negative attitude toward Zionism and Israel) in many ways presaged, was still in the process of consolidation. Added to this was the fact that Herberg was not easily classifiable as a thinker. A Jewish theologian, a sociologist of American religion, a political conservative—he eluded the usual categories. Today, although *Protestant-Catholic-Jew* is still considered, among those who know it, a classic work in American religious sociology, and although some historians (like George H. Nash) regard Herberg as an important architect of conservative thought in the postwar period, in general his influence and his legacy remain opaque.

Unfortunately, Harry Ausmus's intellectual biography does not do much to clarify matters. Useful for its detailed review of Herberg's writings, the study disappoints as a critical evaluation of his thought. To be fair, Ausmus himself notes in his preface that all he is attempting here is "an objective and mostly uncritical presentation." Still, so objective and so uncritical is this survey that it offers the reader little if any true understanding of its subject. Ausmus fails, for example, to place *Judaism and Modern Man* within the broader framework of the "new Jewish theology" of the 1950's or of other significant trends and developments in postwar thought. Nor does he analyze Herberg's role as a conservative political intellectual from the perspective of the emerging "New Conservatism" of the 1950's or of the *National Review* circle. Though early in the book he presents a kind of "Who's Who" of the American intellectual Left, as seen through Herberg's experience of it, the latter part of the book contains no comparable portrayal of the dominant personalities and issues of the postwar American Right. Throughout, there is no discussion whatsoever of what other scholars—including John P. Diggins, George H. Nash, Seymour Siegel, Arthur A. Cohen, and Judd Teller—have written about Herberg.

Nor does the book succeed as a biography. Some of the details of Herberg's life "had to be deleted for reasons of economy," and the reader gets little insight into Herberg's personality or character. Although Herberg was by all accounts a brilliant and impassioned teacher, Ausmus tells us nothing about his career at Drew, where he was lionized by students and professors alike. On the psychological level, Ausmus also scants the very curious and perplexing questions of why Herberg, whom Martin Marty has called a "very skilled reinventor of his autobiography," fabricated a college degree and a doctorate he never earned, and invented an American birthplace to obscure his East European origins. Furthermore, one gains almost no insight from Ausmus into Herberg's relationship, such as it was, with the Jewish community, or into his positive aloofness from Zionism.

To get at these questions one needs to turn back to the work. In an article in Commentary in January 1947, "From Marxism to Judaism," Herberg had called for "a great theological reconstruction" of Judaism, arising from the thought of such contemporary Catholic and Protestant figures as Jacques Maritain, Karl Barth, and Reinhold Niebuhr. *Judaism and Modern Man* represents Herberg's own attempt to pursue this task of theological reconstruction by offering a new existentialist interpretation of historical Judaism as it is embodied in the biblical-rabbinic tradition. While the book deals systematically with God and man, reason and revelation, social ethics, the meaning of Torah, and the destiny of Israel, Herberg meant it to be more than a "neutral, objective handbook on the Jewish religion"; it was, in his own words, also "a confession of faith and declaration of total commitment" on the part of one "whose trust in the idols of modernity has broken down and who is now ready to listen to the message of faith."

At the time, Herberg's existentialist approach struck a responsive chord among many, within the Jewish community and beyond, who were searching for "enlightened" forms of spiritual inspiration. *Judaism and Modern Man* was greeted with enthusiasm by respected Jewish reviewers; Rabbi Milton Steinberg went so far as to say that Herberg had written "the book of the generation on the Jewish religion." Others, however, were less enthusiastic; and with reason.

For one thing, Herberg's theology seemed in crucial respects to owe more to Christianity than to Judaism. Thus, in *Judaism and Modern Man*, which he described as "avowedly Niebuhrian in temper and thought," Herberg sought to formulate a "new Jewish theology" predicated upon a less optimistic image of man, upon a greater recognition of human sinfulness and human limitations. Elsewhere he wrote appreciatively of Niebuhr's rediscovery of the classical doctrine of "original sin, which is one of the great facts of human life . . . at the root of man's existentialist plight." Yet the doctrine of original sin as a theological category is neither inherent in nor central to Judaism. Even though one may discov-

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er, as Herberg does, passages from the Talmud that in isolation convey the impression of a sin-preoccupied culture, the overall emphasis of traditional Judaism is far from the theological pessimism to which Herberg, following Niebuhr and Paul Tillich, subscribes. As a result, whatever vogue it may have enjoyed at the time of publication, *Judaism and Modern Man* has had little to say over the years to Jews in search of fresh formulations of their faith.

Moreover, those within the Jewish community who might have been attracted to the element of affirmation in Herberg were put off by his antipathetic views on Zionism and the state of Israel. Central to Herberg's understanding is the notion that Jewish nationalism represents "the most radical perversion of the idea of Israel," an idea that he connects instead with the "unperformed task" of redemption that the Jews are called upon to fulfill in the world. Ironically, this denigration of Jewish nationalism has more in common with the anti-Zionist ideology of classical Reform Judaism, which Herberg disdained, than with the neo-Orthodox religious thought of Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig to which he so often paid homage. To compound the irony, this same concept of the "unperformed task," of a special Jewish "mission" to the nations, served then and continues to serve as the rationale behind much of the Jewish political and theological radicalism of our time—the very sort of radicalism Will Herberg had come profoundly to reject.

Whatever the reason, the state of Israel never played the role in Herberg's religious thought that it did in that of Emil Fackenheim, Abraham Joshua Heschel, Mordecai Kaplan, and other postwar theologians. Quite the contrary: "For the state of Israel, however highly we may regard it," maintained Herberg, "is, after all, but another community of this world. . . ." That he did not deem it necessary to revise these views even after the Six-Day War of 1967 remains one of the more curious facets of his intellectual career, and another wedge between him and otherwise sympathetic readers.

Herberg's theological writings, finally, had little impact within the secular world of which he had once been a part and to which he continued to address his appeals. His call in COMMENTARY for "a great theological reconstruction" met with a positively inhospitable reception among his fellow Jewish ex-Marxists at *Partisan Review* and Dwight Macdonald's magazine *Politics*. These were, for the most part, cultural modernists who had—to put it mildly—little interest in theological reflection and much less in personal affirmation of religious belief.

To these secular critics, like Irving Howe, Herberg's commitments bespoke a "new failure of nerve," and his call for a religious revival represented "an escape from the responsibilities of political life and the uncertainties of worldly experience." Sidney Hook and Daniel Bell also attacked Herberg's belief that democracy rests on "religio-philosophical" truths about man's fallibility, or that religion might offer a bulwark against totalitarianism. His "defeatist" retreat to religion found little support among most of the contributors to *Partisan Review*'s 1950 symposium on "Religion and the Intellectuals," and not surprisingly, the appearance of *Judaism and Modern Man* the following year went unnoticed in *Partisan Review* and other important journals of the secular Left.

HERBERG'S most famous book remains, unquestionably, the 1955 *Protestant-Catholic-Jew*. In writing it he sought to account for a paradox. On the one hand, no culture had ever been so thoroughly committed to materialist consumption as was postwar America, a place where people lived as if religious teachings and spiritual values were nonexistent. On the other hand, all around one saw signs of religious revival, at least on a superficial level. There was the spectacular rise of Billy Graham; the addition of the phrase "under God" to the Pledge of Allegiance; the printing of "In God We Trust" on certain postage stamps. President Eisenhower had unexpectedly opened his inaugural address with a prayer, and had given a nationally broadcast speech on the need for religious faith. The best-selling book in America in 1953 and 1954 was *The Power of Positive Thinking*, by the Reverend Norman Vincent Peale. Church construction was booming, and church membership rising dramatically.

American Jews, too, seemed to be participating in this national religious revival. Postwar synagogue building eclipsed anything that had been seen in the 1920's and 1930's. New congregations sprang up all over the United States. The American-born children of Jews who had never thought about their Jewishness, or who had done so only to reject it, suddenly found themselves joining and even organizing synagogues in small towns and suburbia.

To Herberg, all this suggested the formation of a society in which religious affiliation, rather than class or ethnicity, had become the primary social determinant. In order "to belong" in American society, one had to belong to a religious community. Moverover, contrary to established sociological belief, America was not one melting pot, but rather a triple melting pot; to be an American in the 1950's meant to be identified with one of the "three great religions of democracy": Protestantism, Catholicism, Judaism.

There is much that was, and is, striking in this thesis—not least, in retrospect, Herberg's daring elevation of Judaism to coequal status in the

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national drama with the two great branches of Christianity. Indeed, one cannot help feeling that Herberg's saying so helped in some measure to make it so: published on the heels of celebrations in 1954 of 300 years of Jewish settlement in North America, *Protestant-Catholic-Jew* served as a kind of "scientific" legitimation of the arrival of American Jews as partners on the national religious scene, bolstering Jewish self-respect and altering for the better the perceptions of American Jews held by their non-Jewish neighbors.

Nevertheless, Herberg's analysis is open to serious question. His claims about the eclipse of ethnicity, for example, were hardly borne out by developments of the next two decades. "The perpetuation of ethnic differences in any serious way is altogether out of line with the logic of American reality," he wrote in 1955, yet only a few years later Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan were demonstrating, in *Beyond the Melting Pot*, the falsity of Herberg's statement. Or again, for the sake of his overall analysis Herberg dismissed the fundamentalist Protestant "fringe" sects in the United States—"they become very minor denominations, hardly affecting the total picture"—despite the fact that during the 1950's close to ten million American Protestants were defining themselves as evangelical Christians and even as Herberg was writing new evangelical sects were arising and older ones were undergoing revitalization. Less than five years after the publication of *Protestant-Catholic-Jew*, the sociologist Seymour Martin Lipset could note that such fundamentalist sects were "far stronger today than at any time in the 20th century," and that the much-heralded growth in church membership was taking place precisely among these "fringe sects," rather than within the traditional Protestant "mainline" denominations in which Herberg placed so much stock.

III

If one tries to account for the peculiar lack of resonance of Will Herberg's name today, these and other weaknesses in his work both as a theologian and as a sociologist must figure prominently. But to stop with those weaknesses is to miss what was fresh and even compelling about Herberg's views at the time, and what still recommends them today. The glue that held it all together was Herberg's emerging political conservatism.

The touchstone of Herberg's conservatism was a political historicism rooted in the conception of natural law as formulated by Edmund Burke (whom Herberg had begun to read at the suggestion of Niebuhr). Burkean conservatism regards traditional religion as the very basis of political culture, without which the maintenance of social order is an impossibility; drawing upon this view, Herberg argued for the necessity of religion as a "civilizing force," one that would enable the American body politic to survive as a moral entity in the postwar world.

It was Herberg's neo-Burkean approach to matters of religion and state that led to his close association with *National Review*, and in particular to the conviction, shared with Whittaker Chambers, that the struggle between Soviet Communism and the free world was, in fact, the struggle of atheism against religion. At home, of course, the problem was not so much Communism as secular liberalism, and as the religion editor of *National Review* Herberg took it as his special task to criticize systematically the established liberal consensus on issues of church and state; in so doing, he made probably his most significant contribution to postwar conservative thought.

The position Herberg espoused was predicated on the argument that the authors of the Constitution never intended to erect a "wall of separation." The "establishment-of-religion" clause of the First Amendment had been profoundly misunderstood: although the Founding Fathers did not want to favor any single religion, they were not against helping all religions, or all religion, equally. "Neither in the minds of the Founding Fathers nor in the thinking of the American people through the 19th and into the 20th century," wrote Herberg, "did the doctrine of the First Amendment ever imply an ironclad ban forbidding the government to take account of religion or to support its various activities." In the last few years this argument has been advanced with greater confidence than it once was; it is worth recalling that, outside of the legal community, Herberg was one of the first American intellectuals to articulate it.

Herberg was especially vocal in his criticism of liberal American Jews and their insistence that religion be kept rigidly distinct from public life. Jewish survival, in the liberal reading, was most secure where the wall separating religion and state was strongest, and maintaining the wall meant maintaining a steadfast opposition to any and all religious symbols or practices in public institutions. In several articles published during the 1950's and 1960's, Herberg urged the liberal Jewish "establishment" to reassess this position. "The American Jew must have sufficient confidence in the capacity of democracy to preserve its pluralistic . . . character without any *absolute* wall of separation between religion and public life," he wrote in 1952. And a decade or so later, frustrated by liberal Jewish support for the 1963 Supreme Court decisions banning the Lord's Prayer and Bible reading in the public schools, he entered a plea for a restoration of religion to a place of honor in American public life:

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> Within the meaning of our political tradition and political practice, the promotion [of religion] has been, and continues to be, a part of the very legitimate "secular" purpose of the state. Whatever the "neutrality" of the state in matters of religion may be, it cannot be a neutrality between religion and no-religion, any more than . . . it could be a neutrality between morality and no-morality, . . . [both religion and morality being] as necessary to "good government" as "national prosperity."

"The traditional symbols of the divine presence in our public life," Herberg warned, "ought not to be tampered with."

Needless to say, the warning went generally unheeded within the Jewish community. Some Jewish leaders publicly dissociated themselves from Herberg's views; in the words of one liberal critic, Herberg was "certainly the most stupid Jew I've ever heard of." It has taken another two decades—which happened to be the politically and religiously fateful ones of the 60's and 70's—for Herberg's critique of the secularizing tendencies of American Jewish liberalism to find wider echoes in the internal politics of the Jewish community (where, today, the influence of the Orthodox is anyway more strongly felt).

Of course much has intervened to make this argument a more respectable one, perhaps above all the willingness of many Americans of all denominations and walks of life to assert the link between public morality and religious belief. From a self-consciously Jewish standpoint, such figures as Irving Kristol, Murray Friedman, Milton Himmelfarb, and the late Seymour Siegel have argued forcefully that an American political culture uninformed by religious beliefs and institutions itself poses a danger to the position and the security of Jews. If even today this view can hardly be said to represent the mainstream Jewish consensus, which for the most part remains committed to the old doctrine of separatism, at least it commands greater intellectual force and weight than ever before. In this it owes something, however unrecognized and unacknowledged, to the example of Will Herberg.

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School Days

A Story

Rachel Abrams

MANDY listened to Billie Holiday and Duke Ellington, and liked to read Herman Hesse. She also loved narcotics. Any kind would do, but she specialized in the hallucinogens. Lily listened to Bessie Smith and Edith Piaf and read Anais Nin. Anais Nin! Lily was a death-lover. She thought about it, courted it, romanced it, saw herself as the new Sylvia Plath. The music was wonderful, but the books and the extra-curriculars were another matter. I opened the Hesse once in a while to be cooperative, but German Romantic mysticism turned out not to be my cup of *Kaffee*. I grazed once in Anais Nin's distasteful diaries, and once was enough. Spiritually speaking, Mandy and Lily had a great deal in common. Both were brimming with energy and intelligence, wit, even, and each suffered from a cancerous self-hatred. Yet after a brief pass at a strange form of friendship they hated each other as well. To say nothing of how they ended up feeling about me.

Let's see, now, how did it go? We met at school. The year was 1968. They were both from New York. Lily was a junior, and Mandy and I both freshmen, at St. Thomas College in Virginia. The place itself was a true oddity, and a rich medium for growing the disease that afflicted both of them. At St. Thomas students were cloistered for four years (if they lasted that long) with the highest, the most divine, creations of human thought. Year after year, near-failures from the best high schools; dischargees from cloud-cuckoo land; brilliant goody-goody grinds; transfers from other, more conventional colleges; even the occasional ex-Jesuit priest, burning eyes and all, came together there to have their minds formed, to learn to think, along the languid, bucolic southeastern seaboard, protected from most 20th-century harm. No poets-in-residence, no sociology courses, no student unions, and no secondary sources. People came to read the ancients, the classics, the originals, and to do it, more often than not, in the original languages.

Very sound in principle, I suppose, but there were drawbacks. St. Thomas was small, suffocatingly small, two hundred students total, and half as many teachers. Not professors, mind, *dons*, after someone's idea of the great learning centers of Europe or something; and we, "Tommies," were their don-ees.

Every year the same story: within weeks everyone knew everyone else's name, and most of their business. There was an oral tradition, as in any small town, about students long since gone (one way or another), about affairs with and between dons, bizarre suicides. It was almost as good as *War and Peace*. Freshmen quickly mastered the gossip, nodding knowingly when names were mentioned. That was social success. The fall Mandy and I were freshmen a don provided our first taste of many. His wife had found him at summer's end hanging by the neck in his closet. His suicide note begged God's forgiveness and bade a fond adieu to the recently graduated Paul. "Jes' cain't get on wifout m'honey," Mandy sang when we heard this story. It was almost *better* than *War and Peace*. The deans of the college tried desperately to keep these things quiet, but these things, especially these things, had a way of getting around. Even through the period of "unrest" that rocked and shattered other campuses, the issues that blighted this one remained purely personal. So, in this stew of sordidness, open secrets, mystery, Agamemnon vs. Achilles, and drugs galore, Mandy and Lily and I tossed around, willy-nilly. By the time I got to know them, each one was well past any saving.

Lily was hard to miss. Tall and golden, slanting green eyes, she was always dressed in beautiful, elegant clothes, wafting expensive perfume as she passed. Here was militance in a place where malodorous drapes (preferably in black velvet) were all the rage. Her room was across the hall from mine in the lone, ancient, creaky girls' dormitory. And she had a car. A huge red Cadillac convertible with a white top. There were stories about her, too. Some of them, her own inventions I learned, she had planted herself: her IQ was high beyond conventional tests; she had resisted the amorous approaches of Bob Dylan (himself!); she had beaten the house at Monte Carlo. Other stories were actually true: she suffered bouts of extreme mania and depression that were sometimes so severe as to require hospitalization; she had

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attempted a few splashy suicides; she had almost ruined a don's life in her freshman year. That poor old guy was a real survivor. He had lived through childhood with the name Manley Hopkins Wren. He had lived through a humiliating marriage (to a student, who else?) and its humiliating break-up (another student, who else?). And he survived Lily, too, though she probably could have polished him off, given just a bit more time.

MANDY I discovered the day I arrived on campus. Her room was next to mine, and I wandered in, lured by an exquisite little jazz meditation on the piano. She looked, that day and always, like a candidate for Boys Town or one of the East Side Kids. Sallow, dark-haired, she was U.S. Army issue from top to toe. Her green khakis, her T-shirt and socks were stiff with the dust of the ages, painstakingly collected—dust from Turkey, from San Francisco, from the Upper West Side, saved dust, like found art. Yet though I felt I was peering at her through this haze of dirt, I didn't miss the elaborate stereophonic system from which emanated the sounds that had attracted me, or the faded Louis Vuitton trunk, or any of the general look and feel of the things rich people have.

"Hey, man, rest your bones. Dig Duke Ellington, and have a toke of this. It's always party time in the land of zonk."

She made no move to remove the joint from between her lips, indicating with a jut of her chin that I should take it myself if I cared to. The smoke forced one of her eyes shut as she surveyed me. Her hands were busy. She was building a kind of shrine to, who was it? Ouspensky? Gurdjieff? Shrinki Pahvahlali?

"My guru," she said, accenting the second syllable.

I gazed at the large photograph propped on top of the trunk, draped with plastic garlands of many colors: a swaddled personage of indefinable sex and origin, gazing romantically back at me. She arranged flowers for his delectation in a little Oriental vase.

"Ooh-la-la, but he's my thrill, if you know what I mean. Oh, and here's my main squeeze."

She tossed over to me another, smaller photograph of a person who, but for the enormous leather jacket and the large motorcycle in the background, might have passed for the fabulous Shrinki himself.

"Meet Dick the Prick."

I did meet him, several weeks later, when he roared down on the motorcycle to visit Mandy early one Saturday morning. His appearance was also the occasion of my formal introduction to Lily.

"Wake up! Wake up quick!" Mandy was banging, beating out the rhythm of a rag tune on my door.

"Ooh-la-la, man, open up!"

I had learned, after only weeks, to lock up against her intrusions, as no amount of polite asking could stop her when she wanted company.

"It's Prickie, man, I want you to meet him. Open up!"

"Rack-a-lack, I want some *sea*food, *ma*ma," was his accompaniment.

The dormitory's hallway was an echo chamber, and Mandy's paramour, like her, evinced not the slightest care for the extremely early hour or other people's convenience. By the time I got to my door our neighbors were at theirs, too, and not very happy about it.

Lily in particular. She emerged, wrapped in her sheet, a sleep mask shoved up above her eyes. She was removing tasseled ear plugs which, notwithstanding their stylishness, Mandy & Co. had successfully penetrated. Mandy's grinning, at-large announcement of Prickie's arrival, and his own "Hey, man, how ya doin'?" encompassment of the crowd, put Lily over the edge.

"Jesus, a match made in heaven. The Dirt Queen and the Greaseman." She smiled over at me and slammed the door.

He *was* greasy, or rather his jacket was, and his boots, his jeans, his fingernails, even the air around him. He did not improve on closer acquaintance. They had made their way into my room, and he glanced around at the walls, which I had decorated with my own paintings. He came to one I was particularly proud of: Clytemnestra and Orestes (if not at St. Thomas College, then where?, as Hillel might have said) on a stormy beach, she fully clothed, towering over him, beseeching yet imperious; he stark naked, kneeling before her, stricken and about to strike.

"Baby, I'm better laid out than this guy, any day. Mandy digs what I'm saying, don't you, babe? That's why you're my love slave, ain't that right?"

In Mandy's case I knew the adulteration of language to be deliberate, a film of hip-talk covering over a literate and literary intelligence. But it wasn't at all clear in his case what was hovering below the grease. Love slave she may well have been, but her contempt was undisguised.

"That's Prickie all over. He's, like, the reverse embodiment of sound mind, sound body. Oily on the outside, slithery on the in. Ooh-la-la, Dick, don't *talk*. Let's get *zonked*, man."

These were the acid days, remember, the magic mushroom days, the days when people communing with God stepped out of their upper-story windows and fell to their deaths. Among Dick's various pastimes, drinking cough syrup was possibly his favorite. He and his cohorts had discovered its hallucinogenic properties, and the extra thrill of cheating, of beating the "military-industrial complex" as they called it.

"It's so repulsive," Mandy had told me. "But what a trip, if you know what I mean. First you drink, then puke your guts out, then fly to the moon, man. You can get the stuff at a *store*, without a *prescription*, and they can't even bust you for possession. Cheap at twice the price."

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I had no desire to clean anything up after them, particularly not the contents of their stomachs. What's more, we actually had rules in the dormitory, "priapal hours," as Mandy wickedly called them, so I booted them out.

LILY was at her door again, this time fully clothed, as they emerged. She waited until they were well out of the way, safely locked up inside Mandy's den, and crossed the hall to me. There she lingered, smiling, until I invited her in. By now I was resigned to the loss of my morning's sleep; and anyway, I was curious about her.

"I've been wanting to talk to you for a long time," she said. "You're a painter, aren't you? I know a lot about you, really. After you're dressed we can go for a drive. I have a car, you know. My father is rich, but I make up for that by spending his money lavishly. I'm sure once you get to know me you *will* like me. We'll be friends. Good friends. But first, explain to me about the Dirt Queen. I mean, really, what's her draw?"

She had been pacing the length and breadth of my little room as she spoke, handling objects, picking up books, taking in the paintings, opening my one, lonely, unopened bottle of perfume, sniffing it, dabbing some on her wrists. She had made her way to the chair where I sat, and her movement stopped with the end of her tirade. She stood above me with the perfume bottle in her hand, offering it to me, grinning, showing small teeth outmassed by gums above, not pretty, and nevertheless charming. I hadn't seen much of unmasked guile at that point in my life—maybe once or twice, only in men. I was surprised to find the quality in this Givenchy-clad girl. But she was right. I liked her already.

She did most of the talking. At the end of a few hours of aimless driving I knew a very great deal about her. For the most part she spoke in diatribes, interrupting them occasionally to ask, "What are you thinking?" with a sideways glance. Even at the wheel she was moving, constantly moving some part of her body, unable to sit still while she talked. Several times we came close to being killed on the road.

I explained Mandy to her as much as it was possible, given the nature of both subject and listener, and she was intrigued by the idea of Mandy's clever, wicked turn of mind.

"But I don't get the dirt," she said. "Why does she have to be so damned filthy? Just think about it for a minute. It does mean something, you know, that she covers herself with dust. She's like some kind of penitent. What is she punishing herself for? And it's not just herself she's doing it to, either. It offends other people, too. It pushes them away. It says, 'Don't come close to me, stay away.' Not counting her horrendous boyfriend, of course. And that's another thing. If she's so smart and clever and all that, why does she want to be in the same *room* with someone like him, let alone go near him and let him touch her? Jesus. Can you imagine it?"

She got no argument from me. I found him altogether unimaginable. But Lily's autobiography left its own unsettling impression. She fleshed out the Manley Hopkins Wren tale for me.

He had existed happily for a decade after the breakup of his marriage, clean and dry in his scholar's roost, pottering in the garden, surrounded by lovely, fine things, when she stormed his gates. Once a year he led an extracurricular seminar on St. Augustine, in his own house, for everyone. Any don or student was welcome to join him in reading passages from *The City of God,* exploring the meaning of God, the flesh, and the human spirit. I declined the invitation, that year and thereafter. These discussions were interminable enough for me at the round tables of our classes, and even on the banks of the river that abutted the campus. But Lily the avid had gone, in her own freshman year, not to set her flashy mind to the sublime Catholic intelligence, but to see what Manley Wren liked in the way of personal items.

He found her in his bedroom, kneeling to inspect the make of his shoes. So baffling, so astonishing, did he find this scene, that he burst out laughing. Such a mild judgment was all Lily needed. She fell in love. And she gradually dragged him out of his delicate torpor.

It was an effort, to be sure, but she badgered him day and night: sent him presents, baked him cookies, copied out Sara Teasdale poems for him. She loved him, wanted him, couldn't live without him. He was her ideal (a word not taken lightly at St. Thomas). After weeks of this assault, stirred and distracted, he gave in. Needless to say she broke his heart. He took a few weeks' leave in Colorado to recover, and everyone was snickering.

"He repulsed me," she told me.

"Repelled," I muttered. "He repelled you, not repulsed."

"So he repelled me. What's the difference? He was so *old,* and creaky, you know, and dry. His body was so dry, and oh Christ, he was trembling. I felt like I was going to kill him, just lying there, but I went through with it because I was already there, but my God, all I wanted to do was get up and run. I had that feeling in my mouth you get with too much peanut butter, you know. That you'll scream or explode with suffocation if you don't get out from under it quick. And he *cried.* I felt like I was dead, and there he was, telling me how I had brought him back to life. I couldn't take it—the touch of him or the look of him, or anything. It was too awful for words. I had to get out."

I WARNED myself as I listened that this girl could have criminal intentions, and that though she might be her own target, she also might not care whom she took with her in the end. As our drive neared its close she asked

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me if I liked her. I told her I liked her very much, that I had had fun, in spite of our brushes with death.

She was uncharacteristically hesitant, suddenly. "Can I ask you a question? I mean, you don't have to answer right away. But this is important. Okay? What I'd like to know is, what I want to ask you is, if some time I came to you and told you I had taken some pills, not just some, but a whole bottleful of them, and I didn't want you to do anything about it, like call an ambulance, could you do that? Could you be my one true, real friend, and just bide that time with me? Could you have the strength and courage to let me go when I wanted to? Just not interfere? Just keep me company until I slip away? Don't answer now. Don't answer."

I did answer. I gave her the most definitive, resounding, unmistakable negative I could muster: "Never, never, ever. Don't ask me to, never expect me to. Never talk to me about it again."

"Okay, okay. Please don't hate me. I don't know what made me bring it up. Please, please, don't hold it against me. I won't ask again. Please forget I ever did."

I let it go, let her change the subject, pretended to myself that this discussion had had a resolution. And in the time that followed, though we spent many hours in each other's company, she never raised the subject. The truth is, she was in a manic swing (though I didn't recognize it at the time), and she was set on fire with enthusiasm to cultivate me: I was her project. She felt she could see into my soul through my paintings, and took three to hang on her own walls. One morning I opened my eyes to find her in my room, reading the journal I kept in a composition book. She dropped it like a hot potato when I yelled out "Hey!" at her, but she was utterly unembarrassed, and unrepentant. Friends shared everything, she believed, even when they didn't know they wanted to. She felt so strongly about it that she forced me to endure the company of "my-Yale-medical-school-brother-who's-brilliant-even-if-he's-a-little-arrogant" for an entire weekend (he didn't like me, either), while she harbored fantasies that we would fall in love and get married.

It was all so dizzying, so passionate. It was so disarming. I found myself, despite myself, slipping easily into this delightful web Lily was spinning. And still, I could not shake the feeling of dread that had come over me when she asked me to help her kill herself.

"I'D HELP HER. No shit, I really would." Mandy and I had parted company meanwhile, by tacit agreement, for the duration of Dick the Prick's visit. And as no discernible form of profession required his prompt return to New York (unless you count the buying and selling of drugs as a profession), he had stayed on in her room for a spell. With his departure, Mandy was back in circulation, or rather, back in my room again, and I described to her my disturbing conversation with Lily. I chuckled at her response, but she defended herself.

"Ooh-la-la, man, I'm not mad at her or anything, if that's what you're thinking. Dirt Queen suits me, if you know what I mean. But, dig it, this is like a *serious* thing, man. If a friend of mine asked me to help her do herself, I would. Whatever gets you off, you know."

I asked her why she didn't just pop across to Lily's room right away and take preemptive action. Why wait for an invitation? She shrugged this off.

"Man, this really sheds new light on Lily. Ooh-la-la, this calls for meditation."

And off she went. I pictured her sitting before the Shrinki shrine, fueled up with some of her "medicinal herb," just chewing the fat with him over Lily and the relative value of human life. I wondered, too, how Lily the adopter would take to being adopted herself, and by Mandy, no less.

But I had other, equally pressing things to worry about at that moment: for though Lily, notwithstanding all her distractions, remained a straight-A student, she had an almost professional ability to prevent other people from attending to their responsibilities. In other words, I was missing classes, and I had a major paper due; and whereas I had never before been a procrastinator, tackling Aristotle's *Physics* now seemed a daunting prospect, better for the next day. But at St. Thomas you didn't fool around that way for long without paying for it. I had already been put on warning by the dean of students during a galling hour of sherry and chat in his office. So I now went at my studies with a fever. I closed my door, leaving Mandy and Lily to their own devices.

For the next few weeks, I struggled to understand Aristotle's argument with Plato and the Pythagoreans over the nature of infinity, and to get my ideas down on paper before they evaporated (which they tended to do rather quickly, because somehow I couldn't put my heart into the question of whether an unlimited body can or cannot exist in actuality). I was working on a painting, too, that my heart *was* in: Athena, being born out of Zeus's forehead, looking not quite formed, an uncompleted thought, yet most unmistakably herself already, and his daughter. Between the paper and painting I was kept incommunicado, and when I came up for air, the Christmas break was about to begin. Only then did I become aware that Lily and Mandy had spent this period getting to know each other. They took me to the airport so I could fly home to Chicago, then drove off together for New York in Lily's car.

LIFE in my family included participating in regular powwows, sort of like Security Council meetings, which took place at the dinner table. Attendance was required, absences frowned upon. You practically had to bring

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a note from your doctor to be excused from one of them. Here every one of us (adults as well as children) opened for general discussion the current state of our own lives, and gossiped with enormous enjoyment about our friends. St. Thomas had nothing on us. By the end of the holiday, my two sisters, my brother, my mother, and my father knew as much as I did about infinity, Athena, Lily, Mandy, Prickie, and Shrinki.

I could see, watching my mother, that each new detail about Mandy and Lily brought a grimmer set to her face. My last day home, she helped me pack up my belongings for the trip back to school. When we were finished, she took my hand and sat me down beside her on my bed. "I want to say something to you, darling girl, and I want you to listen very, very carefully. Those two girls are trouble. No good will come of your befriending them. They mean you harm and they mean themselves harm, and I want you to stay as far away from them as you can. I don't care what you have to go through to do that. You tell yourself you like them, but I know better. If you find you are too delicate to do so by yourself, then you call me on the phone, and I'll get on a plane, and I'll come to Virginia and I'll help you extricate yourself. Whatever it takes, just you get them out of your life. Okay? I want your promise."

I didn't even *want* to argue with her. I knew it was the truth, I knew it from the feeling of relief that flooded me as she spoke, and I left home resolved to act, come what may. I whiled away my flight to Virginia figuring out how to sever relations with Mandy and Lily in a manner most gentle to them, and least uncomfortable for me. In the end I chose the coward's route, composing letters to both, telling them that I would happily maintain the civilities, but that I wished to be shut of any emotional entanglements with them. I slipped these notes under their doors when I got back to the dormitory (thanking God the whole time for letting me be the first to arrive), and waited with suspense to see what would happen.

"WHAT the fuck *is* this, man?" Hours had passed since I delivered my missives and heard the girls returning, and I had begun to think I really was going to get off easily. I should have known better. Even so, Mandy's intensity took me by surprise. If I had been asked I would have said that as between the two, Lily, not Mandy, would be the one to put up a fight. But it was Mandy who came banging at my door, letter in hand, to demand an explanation.

"This is *bull*shit, man. 'I hate the drugs and what I think you might do to yourself with them, what you've already done to yourself. . . . ' Are you for *real*? Who *are* you, man, my *mother*? Hey, my mother doesn't even talk to me this way. You and your bullshit aestheticism, your lame little paintings. Dig it, man, here's what you can do with *this*. You can shove it up your pure little *ass*, that's what."

Of all the sensations I experienced while she said her piece and threw my letter on the floor and stamped out, exhaustion was the strongest, and I happily succumbed to it, literally swooning in the chair where she had left me. I dreamed: my mother putting things away in her drawers, yelling at me about something, I couldn't tell what. While she yelled she was shrinking, shrinking, only it wasn't my mother any more, it was me, and I was doing the yelling. Help me, help me.

"*Help* me! Please open the door! Please *help* me! Oh mother of Christ, please come!" I surfaced slowly from my dream into consciousness: day had turned into night. I had been sleeping. It was Mandy at my door, *she* was yelling, not me, and it was for real. Something was wrong. I ran.

She was white and panting. "It's Lily, man. Oh God, she's *bleeding*. Help me. Help her. I can't help her. I can't look at her. I want to throw up. Oh God, oh God, why did she have to do this to me? She's *bleeding* all over my room. Come to my room. Take her away. She's gonna *die* in there, man. Is she gonna die? You can fix her up, or take her to a hospital, whatever. Please, do something, man. Please help me out of this mess."

IT TOOK ME a while to get it. Months later I could still close my eyes and review the scene with fresh horror and guilt: Lily huddling on the floor in a corner of Mandy's room, her white nightgown blotched with her own blood; Mandy hiding, shielding herself, behind me, handing me over to be mouthpiece to the uniformed cops who had come with the ambulance I called; their interrogating me as if I were the one who had slashed at Lily's wrists and throat with a razor.

And this, too, I could see just as clearly: Lily's soignée mother appearing in my doorway for a little chat before she carted her daughter off for yet another turn in the hospital, telling me not to take it all too much to heart, because after all Lily was prone to this sort of thing now and again; Mandy packing up her Shrinki and her Duke Ellington and her medicine chest, stopping off on her way to her new digs off-campus to ask me if I could believe what that bitch had done to her; my mother arriving to take me in her protective embrace and tell me that everything was going to be all right.

But I did get it. I got the whole, ugly, wretched picture one lush spring day when something in the air pulled me outside to languish on the grass with the rest of my fellow students. And there was Lily, avid again, voracious even, in the company of a new protégée. She glanced at me, then lowered her eyes. She knew, she knew, too.

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Feminism vs. Literature

Carol Iannone

SCARCELY a single scholarly discipline now stands without its corrective feminist insurgency, and the profession of English literature is no exception. In fact, in literary studies feminism is no longer an insurgency but an ascendancy. In the words of Peter Brooks, director of Yale's Whitney Humanities Center, "Anyone worth his salt in literary criticism today has to become something of a feminist"; the profession itself, Brooks says, "is becoming feminized."

Of course feminist criticism was never exactly the oppressed and embattled literary alternative it once purported to be. It has met with precious little opposition from the "male-dominated" academy, and was in fact appeased and accommodated from its first appearance on the horizon in the late 60's and early 70's, when it began to carve out a sphere of influence in the Modern Language Association. But recent gains have been especially striking. It seems quite telling, for example, that the prominent feminist critic Elaine Showalter has risen from Visiting Minority Professor at the University of Delaware to the William and Annie S. Paton Foundation Professor of Ancient and Modern Literatures and the Avalon Foundation Professor in the Humanities at Princeton, and that another prominent feminist critic, Sandra M. Gilbert, has followed Elaine Showalter to Princeton. Still another symptom of the "feminization" of which Peter Brooks speaks is the series of books that Professor Gilbert has co-authored and co-edited with Susan Gubar of Indiana University.

Professors Gilbert and Gubar's first joint work, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth Century Literary Imagination* (1979), was one of a number of book-length efforts to appear in the 70's aimed at analyzing literature by women as a separate category. *Madwoman* begins with a question that might seem ironic coming from a feminist perspective, namely, how did 19th-century female authors meet the monumental challenge of being both women and writers? According to Professors Gilbert and Gubar, literary "assertion" is necessarily incompatible with the habits of feminine submission demanded by "patriarchy." Therefore, the "difficult task" faced by British and American women writers in the 19th century was to achieve "true female literary authority by simultaneously conforming to and subverting patriarchal literary standards."

Jane Austen, for example, masks beneath the serene surface of her art "a subversive critique of the forms of self-expression available to her both as an artist and as a woman." How so? By, among other things, identifying herself in her novels "not only with her model heroines but also with less obvious, nastier, more resilient and energetic female characters who enact her rebellious dissent from her culture." Or again, George Eliot, contrary to the usual conception of her as an author of compassionate detachment, actually commits "violent retributions" against her own characters, and specifically those male characters who "symbolize patriarchal power." Similarly, in Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*, Catherine's "masochistic self-starvation" during her pregnancy is not the exacerbated willfulness most readers have taken it for but a protest against female fate, an "obvious response to the pregnant woman's fear of being monstrously inhabited as well as to her own horror of being enslaved to the species and reduced to a tool of the life process."

In general, the female tradition Professors Gilbert and Gubar document is one of restriction, resistance, and rage—"images of enclosure and escape, fantasies in which maddened doubles functioned as asocial surrogates for docile selves, metaphors of physical discomfort, . . . along with obsessive depictions of diseases like anorexia, agoraphobia, and claustrophobia." Any effort a woman writer might make to balance, or normalize, or enlarge, or understand, or circumscribe these elements is seen as a capitulation to the necessities of working in a "patriarchal" form. By discussing minor writers and works with virtually the same aesthetic deference given to major works; by ranging wildly among authors of very different sorts; and by pouncing on every conceivable reference to gender (noting, for example, that in *Wuthering Heights* Catherine is attacked by a "male bulldog"), Professors Gilbert and Gubar manage to manufacture a case for a continuous and interactive tradition of rebelliousness among British and American women writers of the 19th century, even into the 20th.

WHAT distinguished *The Madwoman in the Attic* from previous works on the subject of literature by women was its authors' willingness to suspend normal literary standards entirely and employ a so-called "female" or "feminist" aesthetic instead. Before *Madwoman*, many would-be feminist critics had

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found themselves bound by the traditional criteria that they either still respected or did not yet know how to be rid of. Ellen Moers, for example, in *Literary Women: The Great Writers* (1977), managed both to avoid any overt challenge to the literary canon and to keep separate the claims of political ideology from those of aesthetic representation. Similarly, Elaine Showalter in *A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists from Brontë to Lessing* (1977), although purporting to reconstruct a lost female tradition, bent no aesthetic standards, implicitly or explicitly, in order to accommodate any of the minor artists she claimed had been ignored, and also cautioned against any "theory of a female sensibility" that would suggest "a deep, basic, and inevitable difference between male and female ways of perceiving the world." (By 1981, however, Professor Showalter would arrive at the crucial distinction between "patriarchal values" and the "female aesthetic," or, as she would then put it, between the "androcentric critical tradition" and the need for "gynocritics.")

Then there was Ann Douglas's *The Feminization of American Culture* (1977), a study of the 19th-century American writers whom Nathaniel Hawthorne called a "damned mob of scribbling women." Here was a female tradition indeed, but, according to Professor Douglas, a meretricious one. Far from being exemplary repositories of a uniquely female consciousness, the works of these scribblers were seen by Professor Douglas as mere artifacts of popular culture and as the products of a historical cohesion between Protestant ministers and female sentimentalists. (In the preface to the recently published second edition of her book, Professor Douglas too recants in part; although she stands by her low critical assessment of the books in question, she adds that "the reliability and validity of the 'canon' of almost exclusively male-authored . . . works is now rightfully and forcibly questioned by feminist scholars.")

Two more products of the 70's were Patricia Meyer Spacks's *The Female Imagination* (1975) and Elizabeth Hardwick's *Seduction and Betrayal: Women and Literature* (1975). The first was feminist only in its subject matter; in her literary judgments, however, Professor Spacks admiringly observes, for example, that the great 19th-century women writers were less interested in "social injustice" than in the "primacy of personal moral effort." The second, although praised by Susan Sontag as "the most remarkable of recent contributions to the feminist imagination of history," was roundly set upon by feminists for, among many other things, exalting female masochism.

In sum, if the feminist literary effort had stopped where these books stopped, it would soon have blended into the mainstream, perhaps having succeeded in focusing a bit more attention on women writers and female characters. To go beyond this point, it was necessary to go beyond traditional literary standards themselves. In *Women's Fiction: A Guide to Novels By and About Women in America, 1820-1870* (1978), Nina Baym appeared to be on the cusp of the requisite revelation:

> A reexamination of this fiction may well show it to lack the aesthetic, intellectual, and moral complexity and artistry that we demand of great literature. I confess frankly that although I found much to interest me in these books, I have not unearthed a forgotten Jane Austen or George Eliot, or hit upon even one novel that I would propose to set alongside *The Scarlet Letter*. Yet I cannot avoid the belief that "purely" literary criteria, as they have been employed to identify the best American works, have inevitably had a bias in favor of things male.

And Annette Kolodny put the issue even more bluntly in 1980 when she asserted that "we have had enough pronouncements of aesthetic valuation for a time."

This, then, is where *The Madwoman in the Attic* came in. The friendly reviewer in the New York *Times* was quite correct in perceiving in it "the first persuasive case for the existence of a distinctly female imagination," and it is not for nothing that the book has been termed a "bible" by both feminist and non-feminist writers or that Professors Gilbert and Gubar have been called "perhaps the most influential of feminist critics." By freeing themselves completely from normal aesthetic criteria and elevating the "feminist aesthetic" instead, they pointed the way to the future.

IT WOULD BE incorrect to suggest, as Patricia Meyer Spacks was quoted as saying in a recent article in the New York *Times Magazine* ("Literary Feminism Comes of Age," by Elizabeth Kolbert, December 6, 1987), that feminist criticism swept all before it on account of its *intellectual* strengths. Indeed, at the time of its publication, not many reviewers of *The Madwoman in the Attic* were convinced by its arguments. Thus, an unsympathetic Rosemary Ashton writing in the (London) *Times Literary Supplement* wondered whether the terrible "dilemma" that is the foundation of the Gilbert-Gubar thesis arises only within the paradigm of female oppression, pointing out that many elements in the allegedly "female" tradition could be located in male writers as well. (Dickens, for example, uses images of confinement.)

Even sympathetic critics were less than fully persuaded. An otherwise enthusiastic Frances Taliaferro conceded in *Harper's* that "For all their scholarly brilliance . . . Gilbert and Gubar are most powerful when they speak to the heart and not to the brain," while the appreciative New York *Times* reviewer quoted above felt *Madwoman* "too ambitious in its reach to leave one feeling that everything it touches upon has been fully grasped." Likewise, Rosemary Dinnage in the *New York Review of Books* complained that "Gilbert and Gubar belittle their women subjects by ignoring their generosity and detachment, by representing them—as they particularly wished not to be—as women before writers, and by imposing a 20th-

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century gloss on 19th-century imaginations."

Among feminist academic reviewers, Annette Kolodny, writing in *American Literature,* found *Madwoman*'s readings "breathtaking," but took issue with the easy way its authors yoked American and British writers in the same tradition, ignoring the possibility that "American authors, generally, suffered before the dominance of the enormously rich European literary inheritance" the same kind of "inferiorization" which supposedly plagued women writers facing the male past. In *Victorian Studies,* Nina Auerbach found that Professors Gilbert and Gubar "argue less by amassing evidence than by weaving a pastiche whereby one woman artist speaks for all in a timeless world." She objected to this "choric method," which created a kind of undifferentiated "corporate womanhood," and complained too that *Madwoman* "posits a patriarchal oppressor who is more gargantuan than any I have met, in the 19th century or our own." (For a committed feminist, this was really saying something.)

In the case of each of these reviewers, it is true, what the mind could not credit the emotions nevertheless found grounds to applaud. (A "jubilant achievement," is how Nina Auerbach described *Madwoman.*) Still, the kinds of objections they raised—against the book's one-sidedness, its tendency to exaggerate, its simplistic identification of authors by virtue of gender, its omission of other relevant critical and historical contexts, its selective emphasis on rebelliousness—all appealed to traditional intellectual and literary standards of judgment. For these reviewers, no "female aesthetic" had, as yet, obviated the necessity for applying such traditional standards, even if a sense of feminist solidarity permitted a certain blanket endorsement despite them.

Professors Gilbert and Gubar's second major effort, the *Norton Anthology of Literature by Women* (1985), collected writings from the Middle Ages through the 20th century. Unlike *Madwoman,* this anthology did arouse an open controversy over its methods when a living, breathing "woman writer" actually laid critical eyes upon it. Writing in the New York *Times Book Review,* the novelist Gail Godwin asserted that "the values of feminist interpretation are elevated to a *summa* at the expense of literary art and individual talents." Women writers, especially younger ones, whose works "do not always deal with female experience or lend themselves to feminist explication," had been virtually ignored. As Miss Godwin noted, Jane Austen was represented solely by a teen-age spoof intended to illustrate her resistance to "the sentimental education accorded Regency ladies," and George Eliot by an extremely minor work, "The Lifted Veil," which she herself had asked her publisher to omit from an anthology of her tales but which supposedly "extends the tradition of female Gothic." *Jane Eyre, The Awakening,* and *The Bluest Eye* were included because each "focuses on problems of gender."

Miss Godwin's review provoked a flurry of angry responses. There was, predictably, no substantive disagreement with her contentions. Instead, in a letter signed by five prominent feminist critics, she was accused of "political bias" and lectured on the "illusion" of universality. "There is no universal literature," these respondents insisted, and "all of it arises from beliefs that are no less ideological for being unexamined or widely accepted as 'normal.'" Another feminist decried Miss Godwin's denial of a female literary tradition "in the face of massive and growing evidence to the contrary"; for still another, Miss Godwin's views could only be ascribed to "the resistance of a woman who is herself at odds concerning her relationship to a tradition of other women."

Of course, what specific "ideological" beliefs Miss Godwin had illegitimately propounded were not spelled out by her critics, nor was any of the "massive and growing evidence" of the female tradition actually adduced. But this did not matter. By 1985, the indignant insistence on a chimerical female tradition had obviously become a useful tool for wielding threats and subduing opponents. For Miss Godwin's respondents, what mattered was that Professors Gilbert and Gubar had established a way in which a feminist criticism could flourish through the dismissal of ordinary standards of judgment as themselves patriarchal and ideological. In other words, they were no longer operating at all in the world of literature and literary standards, but entirely in the world of politics.

Professors Gilbert and Gubar's latest collaboration, a projected three-volume study entitled *No Man's Land: The Place of the Woman Writer in the Twentieth Century,* of which the first volume, *The War of the Words,* has just been published,* goes beyond even the territory gained in the previous ideological battles. Now they are out to prove that all of modernism was shaped by the entry of women into public and literary life, and has been characterized by a century-old battle for primacy between male and female writers. Once again, in the pursuit of their thesis they range wildly from writer to writer, and from period to period, and once again they erase all relevant distinctions—among serious literature, popular literature, subliterature, songs, jingles, tracts, manifestoes, memoirs, journals, diaries, and letters.

The War of the Words is a mess, literally, the result of prolonged indulgence in sloppy critical methods to score feminist points. First there is the authors' reductive tendency to jump on any reference to gender or sexuality in any context as evidence of sexual literary warfare. (As a reviewer in the *Christian Science Monitor* wondered warily: is Emerson's call for "'spermatic, prophesying, man-making words'" *necessarily* "an assertion of gender superiority rather than a plea for creativity, passion, and boldness in literature"?) But this tendency to magnify and politicize

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any sexual reference is itself only one aspect of a larger and no less disastrous critical technique.

HAVING dismissed literary standards as patriarchal, the authors are left with a crude, quasi-biological sexual polarity that is simply inadequate for tracing even the simplest cultural distinctions. They argue, for example, that two famous lines from T.S. Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"—"In the room the women come and go/ Talking of Michelangelo"—show that Prufrock (like Eliot) is threatened by modern women who can now "freely come and go" and are capable not only of "'talking of' but also gazing at and metaphorically possessing the paintings and sculptures of Michelangelo." It is, however, precisely the meaning of these lines that the women in question, and the culture they are meant to represent, do *not* possess Michelangelo in any meaningful sense, but have trivialized him into a kind of tea chatter.

Thus it is with most of what passes for literary criticism in *The War of the Words*, a book in which Gilbert and Sullivan are discussed alongside Eliot and Yeats, Charlotte Mew alongside Edith Wharton, in which an early unpublished poem by Eliot is analyzed with the same attention given to "The Waste Land," and in which the extraordinarily painful and conflicted responses of a young black boy to a naked white woman in Ralph Ellison's novel *Invisible Man* are taken as evidence of male ambivalence toward rape.

In *The War of the Words*, feminism has eaten alive any sense of natural affinity between the two sexes. (The second volume of *No Man's Land*, incidentally, is scheduled to be a delineation of the "lesbian literary tradition.") The quite correct analysis Professors Gilbert and Gubar offer of Henry James's *The Bostonians*—"that even in a society where heterosexuality has been undermined, the norms of traditional marriage will inevitably reassert themselves"—turns into an indictment of James for unregenerate masculinism. The poet W.D. Snodgrass is taken to task for implying in his Pulitzer Prize-winning *Heart's Needle* that a woman might depend upon a man for orgasmic pleasure. Women writers are scaled on how graphically they depict the sex wars, and how successfully they can imagine womanhood victorious.

The supposed antagonism between men and women extends to male and female writers as well—*any* female writer, regardless of quality. Thus Hawthorne is scored for complaining about the "damned mob of scribbling women," even though, as Ann Douglas has shown, he had every right to his objection. Professors Gilbert and Gubar do, momentarily, concede the admiration felt by many male authors for serious female writers, but they consider any response short of wide-eyed enthusiasm to be evidence of fear, or hatred, or both. Although Henry James "supported and complimented Edith Wharton," he also "mythologizes" her "as the whirling one . . . the Angel of Destruction." And Ernest Hemingway "admits about his beloved Marianne Moore that, at their first encounter, 'he not a little feared her not only because of her keen wit but for her skill as a writer of poems.'"

What about those women writers who have themselves expressed reservations about other women writers, like George Eliot in her devastatingly witty essay, "Silly Novels by Lady Novelists," or Dorothy Parker, who disdained "the Misses Baldwin, Ferber, Norris," or Willa Cather, who remarked that "when I see the announcement of a new book by a woman, I—well, I take one by a man instead"? In Professors Gilbert and Gubar's presentation, all these are construed not as praiseworthy attempts to separate the tares from the wheat but as manifestations of a "female affiliation complex"—the struggle of the female writer with her "matrilineal" heritage. Thus does feminist criticism, far from encouraging excellence among women writers, commit itself inexorably to mediocrity and worse.

IN "A Room of One's Own," an essay characteristically misread as a feminist tract, Virginia Woolf asserts that "it is fatal for anyone who writes to think of their sex. . . . It is fatal for a woman to lay the least stress on any grievance; to plead even with justice any cause; in any way to speak consciously as a woman. And fatal is no figure of speech; for anything written with that conscious bias is doomed to death." The truly great artist, Woolf observes, like William Shakespeare, like Jane Austen, is one who writes "without hate, without bitterness, without fear, without protest, without preaching."

Although Professors Gilbert and Gubar deal at length with Virginia Woolf and "A Room of One's Own," they studiously avoid this section of her essay, and for understandable reasons. Their "feminist aesthetic" of sexual grievance and Virginia Woolf's aesthetic of transcendence cannot coexist, nor is any "dialogue" possible between them, since one must ultimately displace the other.

Thus, in their reading of Jane Austen's *Emma*, Professors Gilbert and Gubar see the steps that the heroine must undergo before she can befriend the less fortunate Jane Fairfax as lessons in a shared "vulnerability as a female." What really happens in the novel, however, is that Emma learns humility, a necessary condition before she can feel an affinity with a person more poorly situated than herself. The one interpretation is political, the other personal and moral. The one unfolds a supposedly liberating insight that actually leads to being trapped in grievance; the other is grounded in a self-perception that leads ultimately to freedom from self and genuine attachment to others.

GIVEN this basic incompatibility, feminist criticism *must* eliminate the reliance on literary standards, lest literary standards eliminate it. There really is a war of the words, then, only it is not between men and women but between feminist critics and those who care about protecting the conditions necessary for creating and appreciating great literature. In their angry response to Gail Godwin, the five critics

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resentfully recalled their days as graduate students, when the study of women writers was supposedly a marginal activity. One wonders what *their* students will be saying twenty years hence. Will they even be able to recognize a true work of art when they see one, or will the "feminization" of criticism have so undermined aesthetic response that an appreciation of literary quality will be out of their reach? That depends on who wins the current war of the words; so far the answer seems depressingly clear.

Remembering Sam Spiegel

Daniel Fuchs

SAM SPIEGEL died just a few years ago and a biography of him, already out, deals with the big parties he gave in the 40's at his house in Beverly Hills. Spiegel didn't own the house; I think it wasn't even rented to him but loaned. The streets up there are named after trees—Maple, Elm, Palm—and Spiegel's house was on the 600 block, not one of the better blocks, on the south corner of his tree-named street and Carmelita Avenue. It wasn't really much of a house, no mansion, a modest two- or three-bedroom house. There was a gloomy, empty-looking playroom in the semi-basement, but stemming off the playroom was Spiegel's larder, or pantry, a large-sized cool room stocked with cheeses and all kinds of delicatessen specialties, salamis hanging on strings from the ceiling.

I was at the house mostly in the daytime. John Huston, who died last year, and I were writing a script for Spiegel, who was then a producer for Twentieth Century-Fox. This was the spring right after Pearl Harbor; Huston was in uniform, in the army, but had worked out a dispensation in an irregular military arrangement there is no point in going into. We would meet at Spiegel's house and after a late breakfast or lunch there, John and I would play gin rummy at the table in the dining room. Gin was the game everyone played in those days. Spiegel would lecture us sternly, shaming us for being indoors all day when, he said, we should be out in the sun enjoying the bountiful spring weather, and then, after scolding us, would draw up a chair and kibitz, always at Huston's side of the table, giving him tips and telling him which cards to play. I resented this and protested, no match for the two of them, and in the end lost heavily—well, $700. (Huston never saw a cent of it; he wasn't a good gin player, either. "Make the check out to Toler," he said when we settled up, only partly reducing his gambling debt to the other fellow.)

We were pretty young in those days, Spiegel strangely too, only six and eight years ahead of us, but he was old in manner and looks, European, broad-chested and overweight, with his stately, ponderous tread and bearing. He took a paternalistic stance with us, and Huston delighted in tormenting him. One day, late in the afternoon, after Spiegel had spent hours in vain trying to track us down, Huston got a girl to say she was calling from the county morgue, that there had been a terrible accident, a car smash, two young men, and would Spiegel help identify them, that a car from the coroner's office was on its way to pick him up. Huston and I drove to Carmelita Avenue and parked cater-cornered across from Spiegel's house. He was already out on the sidewalk. He had in those days an elderly, patient, resigned German police dog he was devoted to, and the two of them were walking together up and down the street in front of the house, Spiegel rubbing his face with his hand and suffering until he saw us in the parked car. He broke down completely, out of relief that we were alive and from the cruelty of what he had been put through. He upbraided Huston right there out in the open on the street, shouting and threatening and actually crying. These people weren't as unfeeling as they have been depicted. They had their vulnerable, human side. The director Jean Negulesco, in his memoir *Things I Did and Things I Think I Did*, tells the story of Samuel Goldwyn, another hard-hitter, who couldn't sleep one night, vexed by a casting problem that obstinately refused to be solved. Goldwyn tossed and turned, suddenly got the notion that Spie-

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gel was the one man to save him, hurriedly phoned him and started to outline his problem and what he wanted. "Do you know what time it is?" Spiegel said. "Frances, Spiegel wants to know what time it is," Goldwyn said to his wife.

THE script Huston and I were writing for Spiegel was based on *The Russian People*, a Theatre Guild play which the studio had bought. The project was destined to fail. The screenplay was eventually shelved and our work was all for nothing, but we didn't know it at the time. Those things happened. Not long after the false telephone call from the morgue, Huston and I went traveling to Washington, Huston ostensibly, and I believe actually, summoned to the Capitol on some military chore, so we were again out of reach. We were still under contract to the studio, obligated to work on the script while we were traveling, but when we arrived in Washington, Fox's man there, a Mr. Moreno (whose name I unaccountably remember after all the years) was unable to find hotel space for us. Darryl Zanuck, the head of Twentieth Century-Fox, was also in the city, but he had gone up to New York, and Moreno said we could temporarily use Zanuck's quarters in the hotel while he was away.

Zanuck's suite was wonderful, ideal for entertaining. Washington in the early months of the war was alive with people and excitement, and Huston soon had a nonstop party going—all sorts of Hollywood friends now in town in army and navy officer uniforms, New York City playwrights in high government war-information agencies, handsome Secret Service agents, unattached ladies, husbands and wives too, one of the latter of whom proved to be the cause of a worrisome crisis in the early morning hours. She had fallen asleep unnoticed on a couch, had had a good deal to drink, was disheveled and worn, and long overdue at home. The trouble was she had been in an intense domestic argument with her husband earlier in the evening. The husband was in one of the government jobs that required him to have a revolver on him at all times, and there was no telling what he might think or do if he walked in and found his wife in a state of disarray among us. "God, what a mess, am I glad I'm not here," the playwright Charles MacArthur, also in uniform, a major in the army, one of the guests at the party, said.

In the midst of the disorder, the door opened wide and Zanuck with his entourage marched in, startled and confounded by the sight of all the people in his suite. He was in a bad mood to begin with. He had been before a congressional committee all morning and on the day before—that was why he was in Washington. The studio had made a documentary film for the government as a matter of courtesy, under cost, for a total charge of $60,000 or so, and the Congressmen had been all over Zanuck, questioning the studio's figures, looking for graft, and making all kinds of insinuations. "They think I'm Jewish," Zanuck said, aggrieved.

I don't think it was Zanuck's displeasure with us at the hotel or the expense account Huston turned in, but when we returned to Los Angeles after another week or ten days, we were informed the picture was canceled and our unit was disbanded. Spiegel lost his job and, of course, so did I. Ten years later, in 1952, when I was at another studio, the McCarthy people dug up *The Russian People* against me and started to go to work. Someone told them the subversive organization I was involved with in this enterprise was Twentieth Century-Fox. This confused them and I heard no more.

IN 1962, I was with Spiegel again, doing a script for him, this time abroad. Robert Parrish, the director on this assignment, and I were asked one day to fly down from London and meet Sam at the Ritz in Madrid. They were shooting a number of sequences of *Lawrence of Arabia* on location in the south of Spain, using the desert regions there for Arabia, and Sam was in the country to keep an eye on the proceedings. But the truth was he was really there hunting for his yacht—the captain had a way of sailing Sam's yacht up some dark, obscure river in Portugal and staying hidden there. This was after *On the Waterfront*, *The African Queen*, and *The Bridge on the River Kwai*, and Sam's other successes, but he was still being pestered and put upon. The Ritz, in 1962, was a firmly restricted hotel, not against Jews, against actors.

Sam was sitting ensconced at a library table, reading a Spanish newspaper. There had been a disaster in the States and Parrish and I naturally wanted to know the details. Sam sat us down at the table with him and read out the newspaper account, translating from the Spanish as he went along. That is the image I retain in my mind of him—in his shirt-sleeves, tranquil, at peace, reading out the newspaper account for Parrish and me.

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Into the Abyss

AT A TENDER AGE: VIOLENT YOUTH AND JUVENILE JUSTICE. By RITA KRAMER. *Holt. 309 pp. $18.95.*

Reviewed by JAMES Q. WILSON

RITA KRAMER takes you to the edge of the abyss and lets you have a long, terrifying look. The abyss is Family Court in New York City as it struggles to cope with violent, abused, and disorderly youth. The terror comes not only from seeing the violent ones but, worse, from seeing the inability of the court to do much except return them to the environment from which they came.

Because she was given extraordinary access to the Family Court and its probation department, Mrs. Kramer can show the readers of her book the reality behind the abstraction, "the underclass." That reality includes Billy L., a twelve-year-old boy who with his companions raped and brutally beat a bag lady. It includes Tyrone B., who at the age of twelve killed an eighty-four-year-old woman while stealing her purse. It includes Jimmy P., age thirteen, and Billy, age twelve, and Frankie, age sixteen, who gang-raped an elderly woman on a bench in Central Park; Frankie and Billy had raped another woman a month earlier, but this time they succeeded in killing their victim by beating her to death with a golf club. It includes Shavod Jones, who shot a police officer and left him paralyzed. It includes fourteen-year-old Sammy S., who robbed and savagely beat another boy on a subway platform and then tried to throw him onto the tracks in front of an oncoming train.

That reality also includes some very different kinds of youngsters: a Taiwanese girl who faces a choice of being deported or being adopted by an uncle in this country who is sexually abusing her; a boy arrested for painting graffiti on public walls; an eight-year-old boy who is learning-disabled; another boy who has become addicted to crack and is headed for a life of theft; and countless children living with hostile, abusive, and alcoholic parents.

These children and others like them are sent to Family Court. It is an institution originally designed to handle very different kinds of boys from Billy L., Jimmy P., or Sammy S. For over half a century after its creation at the turn of the century, Family Court (originally called Children's Court) was intended to serve as a substitute parent for wayward youngsters. The child-savers of the late 19th century had called for the creation of such special courts in order to keep children out of adult court, arguing that a child, "by reason of infancy," is not criminally responsible for his acts. Since a child's actions, by definition, lacked criminal intent, the child could not be put on trial or convicted of a crime; rather, he could be "adjudicated" a delinquent who would then receive an appropriate disposition, designed by a court acting *in loco parentis*.

Because all this would be done in the name of the welfare of the child, the proceedings required no elaborate legal procedures of the sort designed to protect the rights of an accused criminal. In particular, there was no reason to have a public trial—and every reason to exclude the public. In 1905 a court held that a child had no right to a trial because children were before the court not to be tried but to be saved. In 1932 a court reaffirmed this view. The children the judges and legislators had in mind when they made these decisions were truants, shoplifters, underage drinkers, and runaways. There were some serious criminals, but not many, and scarcely any who were twelve or thirteen.

In recent decades the juvenile court has undergone two waves of "reform," the first designed to satisfy the complaints of liberals and the second intended to meet the objections of conservatives. The result has been a court system that satisfies neither liberals nor conservatives.

The first wave, which began in the mid-1960's, was generated by people upset by the ability of juvenile courts to inflict harsher penalties on young people than adults would have received for the same offense, and to do so without any of the protections enjoyed by adult criminals. For example, a young boy named Gault was committed to a state reformatory for six years for having made lewd phone calls. If an adult had done the same thing, he would have paid a small fine and spent (at most) two months in jail. Gault earned his six-year sentence after a proceeding in which he never faced his accuser and was represented neither by an attorney nor by his own parents. When his case reached the Supreme Court in 1967, it ruled that a lawyer must be appointed to represent anyone who might be judged delinquent. The previous year, in *Kent* v. *U.S.*, the Court had held that juveniles were getting the worst of both worlds, receiving "neither the protections accorded to adults nor the solicitous care and regenerative treatment postulated for children."

These decisions and others following their lead extended almost the full panoply of rights to juveniles accused of being delinquent. Such youngsters now have a right to written notice of the charges against them, to be represented by a lawyer and to have a lawyer appointed for them if their parents cannot afford one, to examine and cross-examine witnesses, to refuse to testify, and to be convicted only by the same standard operating in adult courts—namely, by evidence that supports guilt "beyond a reasonable doubt."

The second wave of reform began in the mid-1970's. Now people were upset by the rising wave of juvenile crime, especially violent

JAMES Q. WILSON *is Collins Professor of Management at UCLA. His most recent book, written with Richard Herrnstein, is* Crime and Human Nature.

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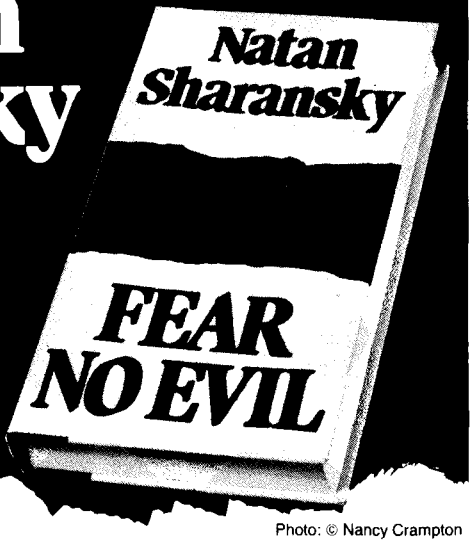

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crime. Critics of the Family Court pointed out that a bag lady is just as dead, a police officer just as paralyzed, when the fists and bullets are those of a thirteen-year-old as when they are those of a thirty-year-old. The New York State legislature passed a series of laws designed to require the court to consider the protection of the community as well as the welfare of the child in deciding on dispositions. In 1976, the Juvenile Justice Reform Act designated certain felonies—murder, rape, kidnapping, arson, armed robbery—as ones for which juveniles (mostly those aged thirteen through sixteen) could receive somewhat harsher penalties. In 1978, the category of "juvenile offender" was established: any person aged thirteen through sixteen who committed a designated felony could now be tried in adult criminal courts. The legislature did nothing about violent juveniles under the age of thirteen; it is still the case that they can receive no sentence longer than eighteen months no matter what crime they commit.

Not much changed with these new measures. During the first five years after the Juvenile Offender law was passed, 5,000 juveniles were arrested in New York State for crimes that could have led to prosecution in adult court. But only 830 were convicted in adult court and only 59 percent of these were incarcerated. Some offenders got longer sentences, but most juveniles who could be tried in adult courts were still being handled by Family Court.

The juvenile court has, however, been "criminalized." In Family Court, Rita Kramer encountered a system in which lawyers argue over rights and rules, on the apparent assumption that if there are enough of both then society and the juveniles will be better off. But the reality behind this fight makes the assumptions a sham, because the process protects neither the child nor society. A twelve-year-old murderer-rapist can receive, at most, an eighteen-month sentence. A fifteen-year-old murderer-rapist will not receive much more. An abused child can at best be sent to a poorly financed facility for foster care; in fact, he is more likely to be returned to the home where the abuse occurred on the grounds that it is "in the best interests of the child" to receive the "least restrictive" disposition and, wherever possible, to be reunited with the parents.

The system has changed from *parens patriae* (the state's power of guardianship over minors and others legally unable to act for themselves) to Perry Mason; once concerned with the needs of the child, it is now concerned with the rights of the child, with some added concern for the protection of the community.

A concern for rights means one thing when dealing with a thirty-year-old, a very different thing when dealing with a twelve-year-old. In New York City, a twelve-year-old in Family Court often cannot read, so he cannot understand the documents the lawyers hand him. When asked what he wants, he generally answers, "to go home," even though "home" may be a rat-infested apartment inhabited by a teen-age mother on drugs and visited by an abusive, alcoholic father.

The Legal Aid lawyers who provide the defense counsel (technically, "law guardians") in Family Court believe that crime has socioeconomic causes that in turn are the result of the failures of government. (Lenore Gittis, head of the juvenile division of Legal Aid, argues that "what is needed is a federal commitment, like the Marshall Plan.") Meanwhile, they assert that the best interests of the child are served by keeping him in the family.

Let us agree for the moment that crime is entirely caused by "socioeconomic factors"—a big supposition, but let it pass. Even so, the rights-oriented procedures of the Family Court make matters worse. If one socioeconomic cause is parental abuse, the rights orientation results in returning abused children to their abusive parents. "It's their right." If another such cause is bad companions, the rights orientation increases the chances that juveniles will be sent back to the neighborhood that is filled with such bad companions. "It's their right." If another such cause is drugs, the rights orientation makes it as easy as possible for the youngster to avoid going to an institution that is drug-free. "It's his right." And when a young person does end up in such an institution, such as Lincoln Hall (an attractive country home run by the Archdiocese of New York), the lawyers insist that he is entitled to go home on the bus every weekend, even though he probably won't go home but will come into the city to score drugs, pick up girls, and get drunk. "It's his right."

The child needing help does not get it; the child who cannot be helped learns that the system is a joke. There are not many chances of receiving either good care or serious punishment. A few good people work in Family Court, but many lawyers and probation officers are just marking their time, at low pay, waiting for another job or retirement.

WHAT does one do about this insanity? No one knows for certain, but Mrs. Kramer makes some reasonable suggestions, to which I would add a few of my own.

First, triage: there must be a system that administratively (not judicially) sorts out the young people entering Family Court into three groups: those who probably need help, those who probably need to be put on trial, and those who probably should not be there at all. The full panoply of judicialized proceedings in an adversarial setting is no more appropriate at the point of entry into Family Court than it would be for the emergency room at Bellevue Hospital.

Second, records: any arrest that does not lead to a delinquency finding is now sealed. As a result, the probation officers and judges do not know what is in their records, and hence often whether they are dealing with a first-time offender or a serious troublemaker. Because only the most serious offenders get fingerprinted, many of the records that are kept are unreliable; youngsters can go through court several times under several different names without anyone knowing it.

Third, care: it ought to be possible to get learning-disabled chil-

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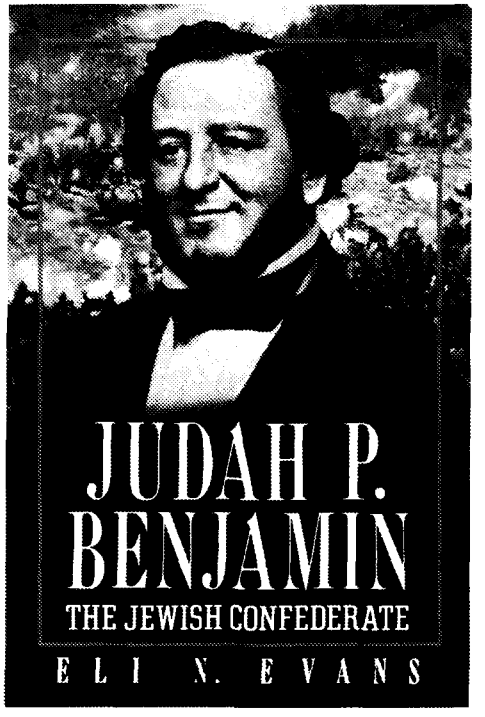

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dren into appropriate classrooms and the psychopathic delinquents out of those classrooms, but schools have become so enmeshed in rights and procedures of their own that it is very difficult either to help the needy or to get rid of the monsters. It ought to be possible, without first convicting a youngster of a rape-murder, to send him to a residential-care unit where he can get the help his family does not provide. There are some good facilities in New York, but the ironic result of the system's rights orientation is that the best facilities get the worst and most hopeless cases, while the children who could benefit from such facilities are often sent back to abusive or discordant families.

Fourth, responsibility: if a person does something wrong, punishment should follow, speedily, fairly, and unfailingly. There are all sorts of punishments, ranging from community service and restitution through long-term confinement. But they are not applied systematically. It makes no sense at all to let an adjudicated offender off scot-free the first few times and then sock him with a heavy sentence after the fifth or tenth offense. But responsibility in Family Court cannot be limited to children—families must also be held accountable. In the phrase of Mark Moore of Harvard, many families are "bankrupt," morally and legally as well as financially; such families must either be made to accept meaningful responsibility for their children or lose them. According to Mrs. Kramer, Family Court probation officers do not even visit the families of delinquents; instead the youngsters come to the probation offices and answer a few perfunctory questions. The individualistic bias of a rights-oriented system leads to the absurdity of treating a child as if he were someone in arrears on his income taxes.

Finally, start early: the most violent and destructive children usually can be identified at an early age—eight or nine—long before the Family Court gets involved. Schoolteachers usually spot them first; they need help then and there.

Mrs. Kramer would add to this list, "stop teen-age pregnancies." I do not know enough about this aspect of the problem to say if she is right and, if so, what could be done.

If a governor or mayor wants to make a lasting difference in New York City, let him go with Mrs. Kramer and peek into the abyss of Family Court, and then set himself the task of reconstituting it along saner lines. If he is not willing to do this he should stop making speeches about crime.

D.C. Follies

The Power Game: How Washington works. By Hedrick Smith. *Random House. 793 pp. $22.50.*

Washington Goes to War. By David Brinkley. *Knopf. 304 pp. $18.95.*

Reviewed by Herbert Stein

As I write this, both *The Power Game* and *Washington Goes to War* are on the best-seller lists. Both deserve to be there. Every week I see several books on the nonfiction best-seller list that, I would bet, are not read through to the end by 10 percent of their purchasers. (We really need a best-read list in addition to the best-seller list.) The Brinkley and Smith books do not fall into that category. Both are enjoyable to read.

At one point I thought that Smith had made a mistake, from the standpoint of sales. He is a wonderful reporter with—to use a Washington term—great access. He has interviewed everyone, from Jack Albertine to Harry Zubkov, with many more familiar names in between. I count, from his footnotes, interviews with about 185 people. He gives pointed quotations from those interviews. Many of the stories he tells are new even to a long-time Washingtonian like myself who is a regular reader of the Washington *Post*, the New York *Times*, and the *Wall Street Journal*, including the gossip sections. He adds something to the public knowledge of some important developments, like the 1986 tax-reform act, the Iran-*contra* affair, and the decision to give up compliance with SALT II. Many of his pictures of the Washington scene are fascinating—the elaborate presidential entourage, helicopters and all, arriving for a quiet dinner with Howard Baker in Tennessee, or Congressmen lined up to tape their 60-second impressions of the State of the Union messages for their hometown TV stations.

Smith's mistake, I thought, was to try to make the book look like a work on "political science." All he would get for his pains would be reviews by political-science professors whose most popular works never sold over 2,000 copies and who would complain either (a) that Smith did not quote Tocqueville or (b) that he used no statistical regressions. That would not sell many books.

But Smith was right. Washington political groupies are unlike rock-music groupies or professional-basketball groupies. They want to think of themselves as serious students of the business of governing the world and at least vicarious participants in it. They would not go for a book called "Life Styles of Semi-Celebrities Within the Beltway." So Smith has provided them with a cover, a brown paper wrapper, that enables them to feel virtuous while scouring the index for revelations about the names they know—or about themselves. I do not suppose anyone will look in the index to see what Hedrick Smith thinks about a six-year term for the President.

The lessons and prescriptions in the book are commonplace, and drawn more from the work of others than from Smith's own observations. It could not be otherwise. One can no more learn about government by interviewing politicians than one can learn about ichthyology by interviewing fish.

If there is any generalization to be drawn from Smith's stories, it concerns the irony in the title, *The Power Game*. The word "game"

Herbert Stein, *a senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute and a former chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers in the Nixon and Ford administrations, has lived and worked in Washington for fifty years.*

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can be used in two metaphorical ways. For example, in *The Pajama Game* the pajamas are real but the game is not really a game, it is a business. In chess the game is really a game—it is pretending—but the pieces are not really knights and bishops. In the power game the power is not real but the pretense is.

One of the best descriptions of the Washington situation comes in a quotation in Smith's book from Elliot Richardson: "Washington is really, when you come right down to it, a city of cocker spaniels.... It's a city of people who are more interested in being petted and admired than in rendering the excess of power."

The Power Game is full of stories of people who, according to Smith, are adept at exercising power—but who in fact fail to get what they want. Smith gives an admiring account of Senator Paula Hawkins's skill in publicizing herself through a hearing on pornographic rock music. He does not remind us that she failed of reelection. He describes the power of the military-industrial complex, but does not explain how the defense budget came to be cut so sharply after 1985. In general, the account written from the standpoint of a Washington journalist underestimates the influence of what is going on outside Washington.

The Power Game would thus have more accurately been called *The Power Exchange*, on the analogy of the stock exchange. The operators in the stock exchange do not own the stock or the money; they facilitate transactions among those who do. Similarly, the operators in Washington do not have the power; they make transactions among those who do—mainly people with votes, money, or organizations. There are some exceptions, but the generalization is correct.

Revealingly, the archetypical Washington operator is called a power *broker*. One of the best of these, Robert Strauss, gives a good account here of the ascending circles of power. First there is going to a political dinner, then there is helping to put on a political dinner, then there is staying at the candidate's hotel in a convention city, then there is standing in the hall outside of Sam Rayburn's suite, then there is being in the living room of the candidate's suite. "And finally, I was invited in the bedroom with the last eight or ten fellas, and then I knew I was on the inside—until I finally learned that they stepped into the john. In the end, just me and Jimmy Carter and Hamilton Jordan made the final decision in the john." But what powerful decision they made there, we are not told.

Smith's book tends to confirm the evolving picture of Ronald Reagan as President. He is shown as having a few firm ideas, the implications of which he is reluctant to explore, and as being indifferent to other matters. But that is now history, or nearly so, and later historians will confirm or contradict this picture. For the present there is more interest in any hints about George Bush.

The Vice President appears in *The Power Game* mainly as one in a group of people who meet regularly with the President. But the few instances we get of Bush's individual performance show him in a more positive light than much current journalism would suggest. For example, Bush has used a weekly private luncheon with Reagan "as a vital channel for giving Reagan confidential advice (among other things, I was told, urging Reagan to travel to China in 1984 and to move quickly in 1985 toward a summit meeting with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev)." Again, during discussions of mismanagement in the Department of Defense, Bush brought Reagan thirty yards of diagrams showing communications circuits in the Pentagon; he told the President that Eisenhower had waged World War II with a staff of 300, but we cannot now wage the peace with a Joint Staff of 3,000. And when, after Reagan's surgery in 1985, Donald Regan, at the urging of Nancy Reagan, advised Bush to stay away in Maine on vacation, Bush ignored the advice.

DAVID BRINKLEY'S *Washington Goes to War*, which is set in the 1940's,

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does not show the ambition to be a work of history or political science that *The Power Game* does. True, Brinkley has an ambitious subtitle, "The Extraordinary Story of the Transformation of a City and a Nation," but he makes no attempt to live up to it, and could not if he tried. He has written the book that dozens of readers of Margaret Leech's *Reveille in Washington*, about the Civil War, must have wanted to write about our times. But his book does not have the sweetness I associate with *Reveille in Washington*. To a remarkable degree, it translates to the printed page the personal style we associate with Brinkley on television—amused, dismissive, belittling. Whether despite or because of that style, the book has charm.

Brinkley's story is of a Washington that was a "sleepy Southern city" in the early days of World War II and became a metropolis at the center of the world by the time the war ended. Why a young man from Wilmington, North Carolina thought Washington was a "sleepy Southern city" is unclear. *I* thought it when I came to Washington in 1938, but I came from Chicago. "Sleepy Southern city" seems to be the standard cliché. People who came to Washington in 1960 now say it was a sleepy Southern city then. I suppose the residents of Georgetown in 1800 later said that it was a sleepy Southern city before the capital moved in next door.

Brinkley's vignettes of various aspects of life in Washington during the war—the "high society," the embassies, the press, the Congress, the crowding, the racism—are informative, sometimes shocking, often fascinating. One of the most amazing of his stories is about Amy Pack, code-name "Cynthia," an American Mata Hari who helped the British steal the German code machine—"the most successful intelligence achievement of the war"—and performed other feats of espionage.

Unlike Smith, Brinkley has no footnotes. In some cases, one would have liked to know his sources, either to check on the truth of his stories or to learn more about them. I detect a few errors about economics. For example, he says that Congressmen were worried about a postwar depression because they did not understand the "presumed Keynesian virtues of huge spending and borrowing and piling up debt. . . ." But it was precisely the Keynesians who were most certain there would be a postwar depression, and the non-Keynesians who disagreed. Such errors are inconsequential, but they leave the reader wondering about other statements in the book.

Brinkley emphasizes change and drama. But he passes over the element of continuity, which may be the dull part of the story but seems important to me, perhaps because that was the past I lived in. Before the war there were tens of thousands of people at all levels to whom Washington was the scene of a great and challenging economic policy enterprise. They were also aware of the rising threat of Hitler. After the war came, these people made up the core of the defense agencies that had been established and had grown even before Pearl Harbor. They lived in the suburban houses they had always lived in, they came into town in more or less the way they always had, and they applied themselves to new tasks with diligence and expertise. They remained in Washington to perform the postwar tasks. They are a key part of the continuing, although evolving, Washington industry whose product is government and which is regularly overlooked in inside-Washington books.

BOTH in Smith's book and in Brinkley's, Washington comes out as a scene of confusion, conflict, and incompetence. And in the cases of both books, the reader is left with the same question: "If so, does it matter?" Despite the mess that Brinkley sees in Washington during the war, a great military force was created, the economy was mobilized to devote almost 50 percent of the Gross National Product to defense, it was then demobilized with only a minor recession, and inflation for the whole period averaged only about 6 percent a year. The record of the period Smith covers is not yet in, but on the whole the country is getting along well despite the inanities and vanities he describes.

Perhaps the answer was given by another Smith, Adam, who said that there is a great deal of ruin in a nation. He did not say that there is an infinite amount of ruin in a nation. It may be that we are suffering a serious disease, located in Washington; but if so, neither the diagnosis nor the cure will be found in these two delightful books.

The Outsider As Insider

JUDAH P. BENJAMIN: THE JEWISH CONFEDERATE. By ELI N. EVANS. *The Free Press. 469 pp. $24.95.*

Reviewed by CARTER COOPER

PRAISED to the skies in his lifetime as a brilliant counsel to the powerful, and just as violently condemned as a sly manipulator, Judah Benjamin, the first acknowledged Jew to be a United States Senator, right-hand man to Confederate President Jefferson Davis, secretary of state for the rebel government, celebrated lawyer, and author of the classic *Benjamin on Sales*, received, after his death, a rather icy treatment. For almost seventy years after the Civil War he remained a neglected figure until, in the 1930's, his accomplishments began to be spoken of in pamphlets, children's books, and patriotic songs. The two standard biographies, written by the Southern historians Pierce Butler (1907) and Robert Douthat Meade (1943), paint a sympathetic portrait of the Confederate statesman but regard his Jewishness as, at best, an annoying irrelevance. Now Eli Evans has set out to give us a Benjamin who is not only an extraordinary and hitherto underestimated Renaissance man but also an American Jewish figure of no minor importance.

Like a proper 19th-century Life, with all the genre's characteristic digressions, emendations, and capsule treatises on geology, climate, and architecture, Evans's *Judah P.*

CARTER COOPER *is associate editor of* American Heritage *magazine.*

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Benjamin opens with an exhaustive survey of its hero's boyhood. Born on the island of St. Croix in 1811, Benjamin and his family moved in 1821 to Charleston, South Carolina, a thriving port and center of the slave trade. There Benjamin's father, Philip, an unsuccessful businessman, devoted his energies to the newly emerging Reform movement in Judaism, only to be expelled from the first Reform congregation in America for opening his store on the Sabbath. The Benjamins thus became "double-outsiders," estranged from the Jewish as well as the Protestant communities. It was this unusual and difficult situation, Evans argues, that produced in Judah Benjamin a profound ambivalence toward his own Jewishness.

He was nevertheless a self-confident lad, who entered Yale at the age of fourteen. A poor boy among rich peers, he rejected the foppery of some of his classmates to acquire a sound liberal education, studying Horace, the Greek orators, philosophy, astronomy, trigonometry, navigation, surveying, spherical geometry, French, and Hebrew. In the school debating society he examined the great issues of the day (as, for example, "Was the confinement of Bonaparte on the island of St. Helena justified?"). But he left Yale prematurely, after being accused of stealing in his second year. Although the actual circumstances remain murky, the incident plagued Benjamin throughout his life. (In 1861, just before his appointment to the Confederate cabinet, an article bringing up the charges appeared in the New York *Independent.*)

Young Benjamin returned to Charleston, a disappointment to his family. With a desire, characteristic of him, to begin anew, he moved to New Orleans to study law. There, in a society dominated by a clique of inbred Creole aristocrats, Benjamin plunged fearlessly into the fray, courting and at the age of twenty-one finally winning a beautful, rebellious, upper-class girl. Natalie St. Martin was a sixteen-year-old coquette with a cause—making trouble for her new husband. Soon after the wedding she grew restless, annoyed by Benjamin's devotion to his budding career as a lawyer, and eventually abandoned him to pursue an active social life in Paris.

In the meantime, Benjamin's law practice took off; by 1839 he was handling major appeals to the Louisiana Supreme Court. Not content with a single role, he amassed sufficient capital to purchase a grand house in the Louisiana countryside and an estate with 140 slaves to work it. His plantation, called Bellechasse, was an antebellum fantasy with a mission and a purpose. Under Benjamin's guidance it became the proving ground for experimental techniques of sugar-cane production: the newly minted landed squire wanted to show the South that this long-neglected crop could be profitable. To popularize his methods he wrote a short book on the subject and invited local planters as well as experts from other countries to tour his plantation.

If Judah Benjamin was a striver, propelling himself forward through a series of self-transformations, Jefferson Davis, whom Benjamin would one day serve, was a careful plodder, bound by a thicket of interior rules, stern, self-absorbed, and proud. Evans makes the contrasting personalities and complicated relationship of the two men a central focus of his book, but argues that in important ways they were very much alike. Both were outsiders: Benjamin, a Jew in an overwhelmingly Protestant world, Davis, a Protestant educated at a strict Catholic boarding school where he attempted to convert to Catholicism (but was dissuaded by the priests). Both were poor boys "educated among the sons of the rich, and both had to acquire the manners of the well-born from the atmosphere around them." According to Evans, "they shared the loneliness of the outsider, the ostracism, the social humiliation, the aching heart that longs to join."

This odd pair arrived coincidentally in Washington as Senator (Benjamin) and Secretary of War (Davis) in the administration of

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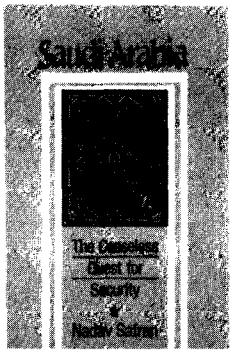

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Franklin Pierce, inaugurated in 1853. Of the two, Benjamin, who was to hone his skills as an orator in his years in Washington—his farewell address to the Senate (1860) is considered one of the greatest in American history—far outshone the efficient but uninspiring Davis. Evolving a political style that capitalized on his charm, he built ties to Northern Senators in the hopes of effecting some kind of compromise over the question of slavery. "Mr. Benjamin was exceedingly hospitable," wrote Varina Davis, wife of Jefferson, an astute chronicler of her times, "and had such perfect self-control that he felt able to bring the extreme men of each party together at his table; indeed he even hoped at one time to bridge the river of bitterness which flowed wide and brimming over between the North and South.... If any man could have succeeded in doing this, his sweet disposition, rigid mastery of his temper, and thoroughbred manner would have eminently qualified him for success. . . ."

Jefferson Davis, by contrast, was close-lipped and restrained, unwilling to brook disagreement. Interestingly, the two men, who had relatively little to do with each other in Washington, once almost came to blows on the Senate floor when Jefferson Davis imagined that Benjamin had insulted him; Davis apologized shortly after the incident.

Once the Civil War broke out, Davis immediately asked Benjamin, on the basis of his reputation, to serve in the Confederate cabinet. For most of the war's duration Benjamin would act as the Confederate president's most trusted adviser: a kind of all-purpose *consigliere*. He went on missions to France to arrange complicated financial deals with bankers, knit together rival factions within the Confederate government, soothed tempers, effectively organized whole government departments with an exacting eye for detail, and acted as eyes and ears to the often unobservant Davis.

As the Confederate capital of Richmond came to be increasingly dominated by the frenzy of the last days of the war, panicked politicians and gossips took turns attacking and defending Benjamin's reputation. He was castigated on the one hand as Davis's "Jewish puppeteer," a man of questionable loyalty, and hailed on the other as a genius, unquestioningly devoted to his president and his cause. Throughout it all, even when derided on the editorial pages of Southern newspapers, Benjamin retained his equanimity—"serenely cheerful," as one observer noted.

With the Confederacy in ruins, Benjamin still kept his cool. Escaping from the Union armies through a devastated Southern countryside, the roads clogged with refugees, houses burning, food scarce, he recited poetry, discussed literature, and smoked a cigar. According to one contemporary who accompanied him on his flight, Benjamin never appeared

> so great as during the time of adversity. Traveling in disguise, sleeping at night in log huts, living on the plainest fare, subjected to all the discomforts of such a journey, with all his plans shattered and without definite hope for the future, his superb confidence and courage raised him above all, and he was the great, confident, cheerful leader that he had been in the days of highest prosperity.

Benjamin fled to England, where centuries-old restrictions on Jewish advancement were just being lifted. He established a law practice that soon prospered. Seven years after his arrival, in an unprecedented award for an American-trained lawyer, he was given a "patent of precedence" as Queen's counsel, and in 1868 he published his celebrated *Treatise on the Law of Sale of Personal Property with Reference to the American Decisions, to the French Code and Civil Law.* A barrister commented on Benjamin's oratorical skills: "He makes you see the very bale of cotton that he is describing as it lies upon the wharf in New Orleans." When he retired to Paris in 1882, Benjamin was at the very top of the British legal profession. He died in Paris in 1884 at the age of seventy-three.

One comes away from Evans's biography impressed above all with the multitude of talents Benjamin brought to his central role as Jefferson Davis's adviser. He was a great orator, requiring a strong theatrical sense; a politician, requiring a winning, charming manner; a wise counsel, requiring a detailed knowledge of human psychology, motivations, and perceived self-interest; a superb courtroom lawyer, requiring verbal skill; and a gifted planter, a profession usually associated with an instinctive grasp of the rhythms of the earth and the environment but in Benjamin's case indicating a masterful will to understand and control a new physical and mental terrain. Immensely knowledgeable, Benjamin came to Davis equipped with international experience with the English press, the French imperial court, and the world cotton markets. His encyclopedic mind stored away the smallest details of military and political operations: the amount of powder left in a Confederate regiment, the nearest supply depots, troop morale, and desertion rates. (It was characteristic of Jefferson Davis that in his enormous memoirs he mentions Benjamin, who for several years was constantly at his side, only briefly.)

If he is at his best in arguing for Benjamin's contributions as a public figure, Evans is less convincing in his assessment of Benjamin as one who was psychologically torn by the pull of his Jewishness. While Benjamin never explicitly denied his faith, he married outside it, failed to observe Jewish dietary laws, did not celebrate Jewish holidays, and was buried in a Catholic cemetery in Paris, with last rites administered by a French priest. Evans writes that Benjamin could not "run very far" from his Charleston childhood, but he does not show what that means, except to point out that throughout his career anti-Semites would not allow Benjamin to forget his origins.

Indeed, far from suggesting that Benjamin—and Jefferson Davis, too—felt themselves to be outsiders, Evans's account provides a fine illustration of how swiftly outsiders become insiders in America. Davis, son of a Kentucky yeoman, became a rich landowner and a successful politician. Benjamin, son of a

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failed businessman, married a Creole princess, made a fortune as a lawyer and planter, and similarly went on to a life at the highest levels of politics.

Although he gives us a fascinating portrait of his subject's private life, Evans avoids exaggerated psychological speculation to focus instead on Judah Benjamin's extraordinary public accomplishments. At times, perhaps, Evans's appreciation of those accomplishments borders on the excessive; no man as skilled as Benjamin was in the political arts, with such a Gatsbyean capacity for anticipating and playing to people's ideal image of themselves, could be the innocent Evans makes him out to be. But we cannot, in any case, know with any certainty what lay behind Benjamin's famously enigmatic smile, for he left no paper trail. Only half-a-dozen scraps have been preserved; he burned the rest.

Books born of personal obsession often bear its stamp. Happily, this Benjamin biography, whose author, as a Jewish Southerner himself, identifies closely with Benjamin's ambiguous position in that milieu, is infused with the enthusiasm and the attention to detail that are characteristic of obsession but avoids the narrowness of vision which is its vice. It is good to have this compelling reminder of an almost forgotten figure in American history and of the world he inhabited.

Music of Our Century

SCHOENBERG AND THE NEW MUSIC. By CARL DAHLHAUS. Translated by Derrick Puffett and Alfred Clayton. *Cambridge University Press. 305 pp. $44.50.*

Reviewed by
WILLIAM H. YOUNGREN

CARL DAHLHAUS is not only "the leading German musicologist of our day" (as the jacket of the present volume quite rightly claims); he is also, to my mind anyway, the most learned and provocative aesthetician and historian of music now writing anywhere. Dahlhaus is already known to the English-speaking public through his books *Esthetics of Music* (1967), *Richard Wagner's Music Dramas* (1971), *Between Romanticism and Modernism* (1974), and *Foundations of Music History* (1977). But readers understandably reluctant to tackle his very difficult German will gain an adequate idea of his full intellectual range only when his fine study of the rise of tonality, *Untersuchungen über die Entstehung der harmonischen Tonalität* (1968), appears in translation—which one hopes will be soon.

Schoenberg and the New Music presents 22 of the 40 essays included in Dahlhaus's *Schönberg und andere: Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Neuen Musik* (1978), together with six others written subsequently. Though it is a difficult—indeed, often a confusing—book, *Schoenberg and the New Music* is required reading for anyone with the slightest interest in the curious fate of serious music in our century.

It is inconceivable that a book titled *Beethoven and the New Music*, or even *Schumann and the New Music*, could have been published in 1888. Wagner had been dead five years, Brahms and Bruckner were heading into their final decade, Mahler was at work on his Second Symphony, and Richard Strauss's career was well launched. Or try to imagine a book called *Handel and the New Music* appearing in 1788—with Haydn and Mozart at the peak of their careers and Beethoven soon to leave Bonn for Vienna. The immense richness and variety of a century that began with Buxtehude and ended with early Beethoven, and of a century that began with early Beethoven and ended with early Schoenberg, ordinarily prevent us from speaking of "18th-century music" or "19th-century music," phrases that seem too glibly general even to serve as survey-course titles. And yet, with only twelve years remaining in the 20th century, we still speak, often and naturally, not only of "20th-century music" but also of "the

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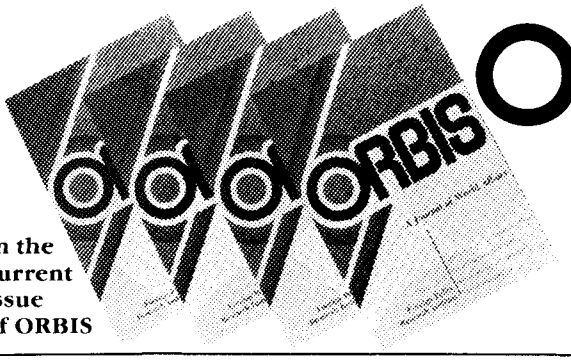

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problem of 20th-century music" and even of "the language of 20th-century music"—as though that language were as remote as Akkadian or Hittite.

Indeed, to many people much of it is. And here we have a book quite appropriately titled *Schoenberg and the New Music*, where the phrase "new music" is intended to cover not the music of the last twenty or thirty years but all "advanced" music since Schoenberg abandoned tonality in 1907: the "free atonal" music of the fifteen years that followed, the twelve-tone (or dodecaphonic) music that succeeded it in the 1920's, the "total serialism" of the post-World War II era, and the aleatoric and neotonal music of the last decade or two.

How did this situation come about? Why is so much of the admittedly most important (in some sense or other) music of the last eighty years still in need not just of commentary (appreciative or otherwise) but of basic explanation? What, finally, are we to think of the music of our century?

Nobody is better fitted than Dahlhaus to address these and related questions. Not only does he possess the extraordinary credentials amply attested to by his earlier books, but he has absolutely no axe to grind. Unlike most writers on 20th-century music, he is neither a reactionary curmudgeon nor an avant-garde apologist. He is out only for historical and aesthetic truth. Yet as I have said, he is a difficult and sometimes a confusing writer, even (or especially) in translation. For in addition to his training as a musicologist, he has evidently had a considerable philosophic education, in the classic German Hegelian-dialectic mode. This sort of education encourages a way of thinking and writing that is somewhat foreign to an English-speaking audience.

In *Esthetics of Music* Dahlhaus gives a helpful capsule explanation:

> The expression "dialectics" means, if understood in Hegel's sense, that something must be analyzed into opposing phases in order to arrive at the thing itself or to win recognition as what it is. In its first, immediate form, its essence is still hidden. Only a development—an unrolling process—by way of antithesis allows the essence to come to the fore.

Thus Dahlhaus is constantly unearthing antitheses or contradictions or paradoxes, to most of which a reader trained in the Anglo-American mode of philosophic analysis would apply a less stringent name. This makes for a dense and clotted exposition, and often Dahlhaus's essays seem more like sustained meditations than like arguments, circling around and around a concept rather than moving forward in a straight line. He is difficult not only to read but also to paraphrase, and one is constantly in fear of simplifying or misrepresenting him. Yet his prose fairly bristles with insights, and the task of reading and interpreting him is almost always worth the considerable effort involved.

Schoenberg and the New Music begins with a group of general theoretical essays, most of which deal with the history of such concepts as new music, progress, and genre. I can here only begin to suggest their richness.

Because music historians were long attracted to the metaphor of style or period as organism—a metaphor whose history and disadvantages Dahlhaus has discussed at length in *Foundations of Music History*—they have often ascribed the quality of newness "to the beginnings of a lengthy period of evolution . . . and not to the middle or later stages." Thus what has passed for new music—the monodies that Caccini published in his *Nuove musiche* of 1601, the *galant* works of the 1740's—has often been marked more by "an unexpected poverty and thinness" than by "anything strikingly new." Sometimes what was "strikingly new" came somewhat later, as in the case of Haydn's Op. 33 Quartets of 1781, which he rightly declared were written "in an entirely new and special manner." Moreover, since the beginning of the 19th century the question of newness in music has been complicated (and politicized) by the growing conviction that the true enemy of the new is what Schumann called the "*juste milieu*," the way of reason and moderation, rather than (in Dahlhaus's words) "the old, which is far rather understood as something that was once new, as something to which one can relate instead of having to combat it." As Schoenberg memorably said, "The middle road is the only one that does not lead to Rome."

Similarly, standards of what constitutes progress in music have changed. "From the late 18th to the early 20th century," writes Dahlhaus, "it was, next to the development of harmony and instrumentation, above all the growing richness of expression and characterization that was considered progressive. In the past few decades, however, the emphasis has tended to be placed on compositional-technical discoveries and hypotheses, on methods of musical thinking." Tracing this more modern way of thinking about progress to the alleged analogy between music and the sciences, Dahlhaus dryly notes: "Modern physics includes classical physics; yet it would be a gross overstatement to say the same about modern compositional technique." And he concludes: "Progress in music is not like that in science, but can be compared to that in philosophy, which is similarly debatable and which seems to consist, inasmuch as it exists at all, less in the solution of problems than in their discovery."

Finally, there is the concept of genre. "One could say that prior to the 17th century function, text, and texture are the primary factors that determine a genre." But in the 18th century, "formal types such as the sonata and the concerto began to determine the genre," along with scoring: "A symphony is nothing but an orchestral sonata." In the 20th century, however, "the constituent features of a genre—text, function, scoring, and formal model—gradually lost their importance," resulting in "the disintegration of musical genres." Thus we have works with titles such as "Constellation" or "Figure" or "Prism" rather than symphonies or concertos.

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All of these essays that begin *Schoenberg and the New Music* are very much worth reading in themselves. But they also have a role to play in the structure of the book as a whole, for they effectively prepare us for the ones on individual composers (mainly Schoenberg) that directly follow. Though Dahlhaus's tone has mostly been imperturbably equable, one can sense troubling implications in the developments he has been tracing—Schoenberg's politicized conception of the new, the 20th-century stress on "compositional technique" rather than "expression" as constituting progress, the "disintegration" of the traditional genres. And at one point he has noted, though significantly only in parentheses, that "complex harmony which dissolves or disguises the cadential scheme cannot structure large forms." What then are we to think of the prospects for atonal and dodecaphonic music to structure the large forms in which Schoenberg, for one, continued to compose until almost the end of his life? The answers are not long in coming.

Schoenberg, as is well known, hated the term "atonality." "What mattered," Dahlhaus explains, "was not the negative element, the lack of tonality, but the reason why tonality had been renounced: the 'emancipation of the dissonance.'" Just as Schoenberg seems to have meant each major work to demonstrate a particular compositional point, so he always sought justification for his compositional practice in music history—which is why he requires an expositor like Dahlhaus, who can match him in historical and theoretical knowledge. His particular justification for the "emancipation of the dissonance" was that the difference between dissonance and consonance was not, and never had been, absolute, but had been differently fixed at different points in history and was, in fact, merely relative, a matter of degree. But while unresolved dissonances in earlier music had always been heard as ellipses that the ear could fill in, Schoenberg intended (in Dahlhaus's words) that "dependent dissonances are to be reinterpreted as sonorities in their own right. The exception becomes the rule, the characteristic deviation a neutral norm, the ellipsis a closed structure."

All well and good. But as Dahlhaus goes on to point out, "it is uncertain whether comprehensibility in itself is the decisive factor": "The emancipated dissonance, . . . in contradistinction to the dependent one, is an event without consequences, an isolated sonority. The chord is not deprived of comprehensibility, but it no longer leads anywhere." In the 1920's Schoenberg sought to impose the twelve-tone method as a way of creating the unifying force formerly supplied by the directionality of tonal harmony. Yet, as Dahlhaus concludes, "The difficulty occasioned by the fact that emancipated dissonances could not create progressions remained unresolved."

Another of Schoenberg's key concepts was that of "musical prose," which he introduced in his important 1947 essay "Brahms the Progressive" and which he intended, as Dahlhaus puts it, to perform "a function in the areas of rhythm and melody similar to that performed by the emancipation of the dissonance in the area of harmony." By citing examples of irregular phrase construction not only from Brahms but also from Mozart and still earlier composers, Schoenberg once again sought to justify his own practice. Dahlhaus too cites many earlier examples, but his point is quite different: "In Schoenberg's music the neutral medium that held together the heterogeneous musical shapes in Mozart—the medium consisting of the regular 'pulse' of beats and the uniformity of 'harmonic rhythm'—has disappeared."

DAHLHAUS is not a writer who calls attention to his own shifts in opinion. Everything comes with the same mix of authority and judicious awareness of the complexities involved, the authority having been (one feels) hard earned by the awareness. One is therefore reluctant to draw any conclusions about ways in which his thought on these matters may have changed. But the two essays I have just cited come from the 1960's. In the 1974 essay "Schoenberg and Programme Music," writing of the 1930 *Begleitungsmusik zu einer Lichtspielszene*, ("Music to Accompany a Film Scene") he was still willing, at least in this particular case, to take Schoenberg's side against his critics: "The enduring complaint that the twelve-note structure cannot be heard is mindless: it was never Schoenberg's intention to emphasize the technique. Yet . . . the sense of a hidden logic forces itself on a listener even if he cannot understand the construction." But then, in the very next sentence, Dahlhaus seems to turn an unacknowledged corner: "Nonetheless a twelve-note structure that is virtually inaudible and may remain so is without significance for the external form, the outline of the whole. And the price Schoenberg paid in this work for making the compositional technique more sophisticated by using dodecaphony was a coarsening of the formal conception."

True, Dahlhaus is ostensibly here discussing only a single work. But his language is uncharacteristically violent: "enduring complaint" is a weak and weary rendering of the phrase "*unausrottbare Vorwurf*," which might be better glossed as a reproach that cannot be stamped out or exterminated. This extraordinary tone suggests that Dahlhaus is, though perhaps unconsciously, thinking not just of the *Begleitungsmusik* but of all twelve-tone music—surely there cannot have been that many complaints launched against this particular work. And if the twelve-tone organization, even just of this work alone, is "without significance for the external form" because it is "virtually inaudible," then why should the reproach or complaint, even it can be justified by reference to Schoenberg's "intention," be termed "mindless"? Where, exactly, does Dahlhaus stand in all this?

By 1976, in "Schoenberg's Poetics of Music," he was willing to state more generally (though still cautiously) the implications of the technical insights contained in his essays of the 1960's. "The abolition of tonality," he writes, "was therefore an emancipation which at the

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same time represented a loss. And it seems as if the invention of dodecaphony—which he construed as a discovery—was felt by Schoenberg to be a way out of an impasse which had come about due to the renunciation of the backing provided by tonality." Despite the cautious phrasing, the sense that Schoenberg's subjective (and mistaken) point of view is being opposed to the musical (i.e., audible) reality is very clear—and is, in fact, still clearer in the German, which does not say "which he construed" but rather "*die ihm . . . erschien,*" "which seemed or appeared to him."

By 1984, in "Schoenberg's Aesthetic Theology," perhaps the richest of all this group of essays, Dahlhaus was ready to go still further. After speaking of the emancipation of the dissonance as "not so much a qualitative leap logically resulting from what had gone before as an arbitrary act," he finally (and with some pain) lays all his cards on the table:

> Yet the fact remains—and to have to admit this is rather difficult for a historian—that it is, strictly speaking, impossible to give a reason for Schoenberg's decision of 1907. Those who speak of historical necessity, of the dictates of the historical moment which Schoenberg obeyed, make the event appear more harmless than it actually was. The suspension of the existing order, the proclamation of the musical state of emergency, was an act of violence. And thus the theories with which Schoenberg attempted to justify the emancipation of the dissonance are characterized by a helplessness which prevents us from taking them at their word as being motives for compositional decisions. The same holds true, a decade and a half later, for the step to "composition with twelve notes related only to one another."

This is indeed a stunning admission, and it prepares us for the rather elegiac tone that pervades the theoretical essays that conclude *Schoenberg and the New Music.*

These deal mainly with developments of the post-World War II years, which Dahlhaus does not view kindly. Mainly he deplores the tendency of recent composers to relinquish the concept of the autonomous musical work, a tendency directly related to the disintegration of genres on which he has earlier commented. Composers have now "become suspicious of the criterion of survival. . . . Rapid aging is not felt to be a defect or a sign of failure, but is taken as a matter of course, as something that is self-evident. . . . What a composer commits to paper is not so much a text as a graphic means of causing music to be produced." This stress on activity and process at the expense of structure and product, this "ideology of directness and spontaneity . . . among composers who are tired of the discipline of serial thought," seems to Dahlhaus nothing more (or less) than "a relapse into a second primitivism." For he firmly insists that "the category of the work of art, though it is undeniably of Romantic origin, continues to perform a function."

Opposed (and complementary) to the decline in importance of the concept of the musical work of art is the elevation of improvisation, which Dahlhaus sees as having generated among composers "aesthetic expectations" that are "excessive and utopian." For "in an improvisation only the here and now, the direct impression, is of decisive importance. . . . Composition tends toward objectivity; improvisation is mere execution." And of course one source from which recent composers have derived their ideas of improvisation is jazz and pop music, which Dahlhaus sternly dismisses as "anti-art" that is "directed against the esoteric quality of the musical avant-garde and of art in general." "The initiated," he tells us, "do not judge jazz improvisation in formal terms according to the manner in which the details join to make a consistently developing whole, but exclusively in stylistic terms, from the perspective of the homogeneous or heterogeneous nature of the musical means."

At this point even a reader who has so far agreed with Dahlhaus's strictures against much of what has happened in 20th-century music feels impelled to object. Does he have any firsthand experience of the greatest jazz? If so, how could he possibly have made the absurd statement just cited? For once, his authoritative tone seems unearned. At another point he defines aesthetic judgment as "a historically circumscribed form of evaluation which is based on the work concept and on the sharp distinction between art and non-art." It is just here, I think, that his habit of thinking in terms of antitheses, his Hegelianism if you will, betrays him. Whether or not one likes jazz, it is experientially and conceptually untrue that aesthetic judgments necessarily rest upon any sharp *a priori* distinction between art and non-art. One wishes that Dahlhaus had read some of the works on aesthetics written by English and American followers of Wittgenstein.

One might also offer a related objection to the reason that Dahlhaus gives, in "Schoenberg's Aesthetic Theology," for the failure of historical explanations to justify Schoenberg's jettisoning of tonality:

> . . . the attempt to explain in terms of the philosophy of history Schoenberg's power to take decisions, that is, to interpret the *diktat* of the individual as that of history, is questionable inasmuch as the concept of the "one" history which the philosophy of history assumes to exist is doubtful and may be suspected of being a myth. What really happens are histories—in the plural: at different places and under divergent circumstances. "History" in the singular is a fiction.

This curious view is restated in several other essays, yet to me it seems mere playing with words. A person has a history, as does a family, a town, a nation, an epoch, the world, the universe. The more general our historical explanations become, the more liable, perhaps, they are to error and distortion. But there is no logically necessary (or determinable) stopping point in the ascent to total generality, and therefore nothing conceptually wrong in speaking of history in the singular.

Anyhow, the real reason Schoen-

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berg's lurch into atonality (or whatever we choose to call it) is not historically justifiable is that deterministic accounts do not work very well in any sort of history that deals with the choices of rational human agents, and they work especially poorly in the history of the arts. The whole notion that tonality gradually became exhausted, played out, incapable of further use by composers is the real fiction, created in the minds of Schoenberg and others operating under the influence of Marxist and other sorts of 19th-century deterministic dogma. Its untruth is proved by the existence of a wealth of successful tonal and quasi-tonal works by composers such as Stravinsky, Bartók, Britten, Janáček, Prokofiev, and Shostakovich. The flaw in the phrase "*diktat* of history" lies not in the latter word but in the former one.

WHAT does Dahlhaus see as music's future? It is hard to say. In 1966 he was willing to declare flatly: "The premises of earlier music—tonal harmony and metrical rhythm—cannot be restored." But this smacks of a determinism just as sterile and wrongheaded as Schoenberg's. In the most recent of the essays collected in *Schoenberg and the New Music*, "Tonality: Structure or Process?" (which had not even appeared in German when the book went to press), he takes a more moderate position. Objecting to "generally unphilosophically-minded post-modernists" who "regard everything as usable and blithely . . . heap layer upon layer of a whole heterogeneous host of different stylistic fragments and quotations," he writes: "The virtually inevitable result of all this is an effect which, in Stravinsky, was a precisely calculated technique with clearly established aesthetic assumptions . . . but which at present often seems to be no more than a blind grab into the biscuit tin of the past." When one thinks of the work of the minimalists and the various promoters of the New Romanticism, it is hard not to agree.

I was surprised, though, that Dahlhaus does not once mention Elliott Carter, perhaps the most distinguished of living composers, and that he mainly mentions Pierre Boulez as an essayist and theorist rather than as a composer—though he spends a good deal of time on the boring John Cage. Moreover, if he were not so committed to his rigid distinction between art and non-art, Dahlhaus might see some truth in the contention of the late Deryck Cooke that the finest jazz and popular music have performed an important function in our century by helping to reinstate what Cooke called "the musical vernacular"—that is, tonal harmony and metrical rhythm—as a vital force in the wake of Schoenberg's destructive influence.

YET when all is said and done, all objections duly proffered, one must emphatically repeat that *Schoenberg and the New Music* is an absolutely smashing book. Of the essays to which I have not hitherto called attention, I would in conclusion single out three: "Problems of Rhythm in the New Music," in which Dahlhaus sensitively analyzes passages from Webern and early Stravinsky; "Schoenberg and Schenker," in which he brilliantly shows how Heinrich Schenker, the great conservator of tonality, was really working the other side of the same street as his old enemy; and "The Musical Work of Art as a Subject of Sociology," in which Dahlhaus defends the autonomy of music history and the musical work against that other notable Hegelian, Theodor Adorno. Schoenberg and Adorno, it becomes clear, are Dahlhaus's two masters—at least when it comes to thinking about 20th-century music and its problems. *Schoenberg and the New Music* may be read as his courageous and successful attempt to lay their troubling ghosts.

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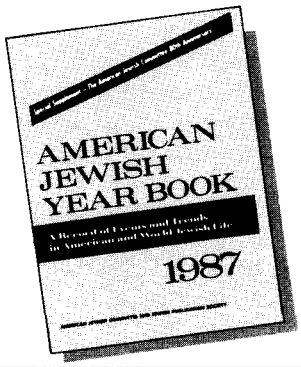

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Christian Unity

THE CATHOLIC MOMENT: THE PARADOX OF THE CHURCH IN THE POSTMODERN WORLD. By RICHARD JOHN NEUHAUS. *Harper & Row. 292 pp. $19.95.*

Reviewed by WILFRED M. MCCLAY

IN ANOTHER twenty-nine years, it will have been half a millennium since the autumn day in 1517 when Martin Luther posted his *Ninety-five Theses* on the castle church door in Wittenberg. Luther intended that gesture, standard practice in the academic disputations of his time, as a challenge to internal debate on the Church's sale of indulgences. But in retrospect it looms as a pivotal event in the fragmentation of Western Christianity, the case that launched a thousand sects. After five centuries, Roman Catholics have come around to endorsing much of the Lutheran critique of the pre-Reformation Church, but the chain reaction of institutional fission set off in those turbulent years has proved far more difficult to reverse.

Or even, for that matter, to stop. Indeed, the ongoing process of denominational mitosis seems to have an especially powerful momentum in a society as prone to individualism, anti-institutionalism, antinomianism, and ecclesiastical unruliness as the United States. The history of American Christianity, begun largely in acts of protest and separation, has always been one of a bewildering mosaic of sectarian feuds, its many-colored pieces arranged according to all imaginable points of reference: New Lights against Old Lights, Northerners against Southerners, fundamentalists against modernists, Anglo-Saxons against immigrants, and so on, with each new dispute leading to a further subdividing of institutions. Our intellectual history in general, too, has been dominated by figures of rebellion, following in the anti-authoritarian footsteps of Ralph Waldo Emerson.

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But the time has now come, asserts the distinguished Lutheran pastor and writer Richard John Neuhaus, to begin reversing the process, in the United States and the rest of the world, and the Roman Catholic Church should play a crucial role in that reversal. Neuhaus clearly savors the irony inherent in a Lutheran's putting forth such a position, for he concludes his book with ten theses—propositions meant both to undo the disunity Luther helped precipitate and to fulfill the desire for ecclesiastical and spiritual renewal that fueled Luther's sacred rage.

How, then, is this end to be accomplished? In a sense, the argument of *The Catholic Moment* is contained in the title. The Roman Catholic Church, Neuhaus believes, is perfectly positioned at this precise historical juncture to serve as "the lead church" in proclaiming the Christian Gospel to the world and in promoting the recovery of Christian unity. This leading role has been made possible partly by the broadly ecumenical opening-up of the Roman Church wrought by the Second Vatican Council, which helped to remove the aura of "otherness" which Protestants had so often projected onto Catholics. It has also been made possible, in Neuhaus's view, by the extraordinary influence of John Paul II and his associate Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, who have convincingly articulated a post-modern (rather than neo-medieval) understanding of the Church and of its paradoxical standing in this world. They see a Church standing in neither pure transcendence of the world, nor as a signatory party to the quarrels of the world's principalities and powers, but in tense and paradoxical relation to both stances, in simultaneous engagement and disengagement, fully answerable to a perfection which the imperfect Church is inexorably required to embody.

This idea of "Church and world in paradox," which Neuhaus derives from the work of H. Richard Niebuhr, can help Christians make sense of the ecclesiastical pluralism that continues to flourish, despite the scriptural requirement that there be but one Church. Pluralism, in his view, is a persistent reminder of inevitable imperfection, "evidence of the incompleteness of the world and of the Church within the world." It is here that Rome enters the argument. Neuhaus believes that the Roman Church's ability to manage immense internal diversity—its many orders, national cultures, traditions, and patterns of thought, all of which illustrate its uncanny ability to assimilate internal dissent—makes it "the paradigmatic instance of the unity in diversity that other churches should emulate," a kind of model for pluralistic Christendom.

LIKE everything Richard John Neuhaus writes, this is an argument at once ambitious and thoughtful, richly informed by his intimate acquaintance with the principal currents of theological thought and ecclesiastical politics in our time, and deeply ecumenical in spirit. It is an unusual position as well, not least because ardent admiration of Vatican II and ardent admiration of John Paul II and Cardinal Ratzinger so rarely coexist in the same person. Perhaps it helps to be a Lutheran. Neuhaus sees these matters through dialectical glasses, and urges that the new forces coursing through the Church, far from representing a sterile antagonism of revolution and counterrevolution, or progress and reaction, ought to be understood as reinforcing one another, even if the cunning of history prevents contemporary observers from knowing it.

This book can also be read as a logical extension of Neuhaus's influential recent work on religion and democracy, which has done so much to enrich our understanding of the public realm. In *The Naked Public Square*, Neuhaus argued that in America the public arena should not be regarded as a value-neutral libertarian free-fire zone, to which only considerations of religious faith and conviction are denied admission; instead, a healthy public life presupposes the possibility of appeal to a culture's shared values, of which religion is the most potent source. *The Catholic Moment* attempts to put meat on the bones of that argument,

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declaring that the Roman Catholic Church "can and should" now assume "its rightful role in the culture-forming task of constructing a religiously informed public philosophy for the American experiment in ordered liberty." Neuhaus's argument, therefore, has implications extending well beyond the orbit of Christian institutions.

Needless to say, such a development, were it to occur, would represent a dramatic reversal of much of our history. Consider, for example, the long record of anti-Catholic sentiment among Protestant Americans, or the deep distrust of Rome currently felt by many American Jews. Yet as a possibility it looks a good deal better when one begins sizing up the alternatives. The mainline Protestant churches have the virtues of institutional stability, intellectual sophistication, and ecumenical tolerance, but their increasingly this-worldly orientation has led to political radicalization, spiritual vacuity, and waning membership, making it virtually inconceivable that they will be able to serve in the responsible capacity Neuhaus envisions. The fundamentalist and evangelical denominations have the swelling numbers and swelling energies on their side, but in their enthusiasm they often lack the liberality of spirit, the breadth of cultural sympathies, and the commitment to institutional continuity which Neuhaus requires.

The Roman Catholic Church, by contrast, possesses in his view many of the best qualities of both camps, while managing to be relatively free of their weaknesses. Hence it represents the best hope for a middle ground between secularism and dogmatism, a middle ground whose example will also serve to support "the American proposition" of political and social unity-in-diversity.

IT IS all very attractive, as Neuhaus relates it, but I am afraid it is also too good to be true. Neuhaus has certainly offered a striking rethinking of the Roman Church's possible future relationship to American society, and vice versa, and one that deserves further exploration. But as a plausible description of the Church's current disposition and direction, it is simply too far from the mark; so far, indeed, that one feels that Neuhaus is allowing his imagination to run away with him. In general, he greatly underestimates the degree to which the Roman Church in the United States has been following the same pattern of polarization, radicalization, and disintegration as the Protestant churches, with the added consequence that such a drift has furthered the tendency to disregard Papal authority selectively—a tendency quite as evident on the Right as the Left.

It is not that Neuhaus has forgotten the intense conflicts, rehearsed with numbing regularity in the news media, concerning priestly celibacy, birth control, abortion, ordination of women, liberation theology, and *tutti quanti*. Nor is he unaware of the astonishing drop in the number of entrants into the priesthood and monastic orders which seems to point to profound institutional decline. Neuhaus knows the arguments against him. Indeed, one wishes that he had been willing to risk presenting his theses very sharply (as Luther did his), instead of attempting to anticipate and answer all the difficulties that readers might have with them—a decision which contributes to the book's unnecessarily murky and self-interrupted style. In the end, however, his sense of the grand possibilities latent in this historical moment overwhelms all the problems.

A MORE skeptical observer could feel fully justified in predicting, on the basis of evidence that Neuhaus himself provides in abundance, a far different ecclesiastical future. Is there, for example, any sign that a great ecumenical groundswell is likely to take place? To some extent, yes, given the ongoing rapprochement between Lutherans and Catholics, or Anglicans and Catholics, and the decline of anti-Semitism among the fundamentalists. But it is difficult to imagine fundamentalists ever accepting the leadership of Rome, even in the most provisional sense—a fact which immediately eliminates from the picture the most dynamic force in institutional Christianity. Nor are Jews ever likely to feel comfortable with the dispensationalist theology that currently makes fundamentalists so friendly toward them, since that is no substitute for being understood and respected on one's own terms.

As for the ecumenism of mainline Protestant churches, that is in large measure a necessary response to their decline, in the light of

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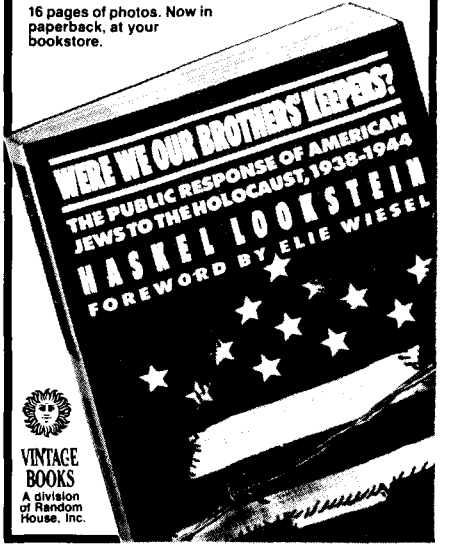
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which old differences have suddenly come to seem insignificant. This ecumenism is increasingly built around specific positions on political and social issues, in which leftist Protestants, Catholics, and Jews gravitate together in order to align themselves against conservative Protestants, Catholics, and Jews. In other words, it is an ecumenism based upon the rise of unbelief, the attenuation of tradition, and the primacy of politics—an ecumenism which follows the concerns of the public square rather than informing them.

Such, of course, is exactly the outcome Neuhaus is trying to avert. But it seems far more likely than what he envisions. The *Ninety-five Theses* engendered a Protestant Reformation not only because of Luther but because all the necessary historical conditions were ripe for it—the rise of national and ethnic consciousness, of urban centers, of a commercial middle class, of printing and literacy, of political challenges to the empire, of intellectual challenges to the Church's hegemony, and so on. It is not at all clear that the waning of the modern age, if that is what we are now living through, provides a similar basis for some sort of reunification. To be sure, we can only know in retrospect what "the necessary historical conditions" were, and one should never underestimate the transforming power of ideas. Neither, however, should one overestimate them, at the expense of powerful and longstanding social forces. One can be sympathetic to the intentions of Neuhaus's argument and yet find little reason to believe that what he recommends can happen.

Still, in all fairness, these objections show how difficult it is to move from an abstract understanding of consensual values (provided by something called "religion") to more specific descriptions of those values, which end up touching on particular creeds that have often come into conflict with one another. It is very much in vogue now to write wistfully about our neglect of the public realm, and the need for shared values; but one generally finds, as in Robert Bellah's much-acclaimed *Habits of the Heart*, that the writers who work these themes scrupulously avoid specifics, particularly in the area of prescriptive values, preferring to talk about "biblical" or "republican" traditions whose precise contents are to be defined later, if at all. That way, everyone comes away feeling good about our "commitment" to "values," no one is offended or made to feel left out, but nothing is accomplished. It is hard to see that this advances us much beyond the "therapeutic ethos" such authors frequently decry.

Richard John Neuhaus has been far bolder, basing his reasoning on an awareness that real institutions, not *ad hoc* "traditions," are the true carriers of culture. But this approach runs greater risks, precisely the risks that other writers so skillfully avoid. *The Catholic Moment* is unabashedly and insistently Christian in its outlook and in the presumptions it makes of its audience; hence, there may be plenty of otherwise sympathetic readers who will have the uneasy feeling that they are being drafted into someone else's campaign. It presents, in a sense, the same problem posed by the concept of the "Judeo-Christian tradition"—a vague and denatured thing at best, which is all too suggestive about who is to be considered the junior partner, and which serves to smooth over a history that needs instead to be confronted and honestly explored. Yet it is also a concept that, in the end, we badly need, and we are certainly likely to learn more about it from Neuhaus than from the current crop of sociological sages.

In sum, the intellectual and practical problems of a unity-in-diversity seem unlikely to yield to gentle persuasion or Hegelian synthesis. Neuhaus is profoundly right that the only way to find enduring cultural common ground is—paradoxically—by acknowledging the enduring claims of the past, in all their diversity and particularity. There is no guarantee, however, that these divergent affirmations will add up to any sort of unity, even within the still-fragmenting house of Christendom. The reforming of society can be a significant by-product of religion, but it is not religion's *raison d'être*.

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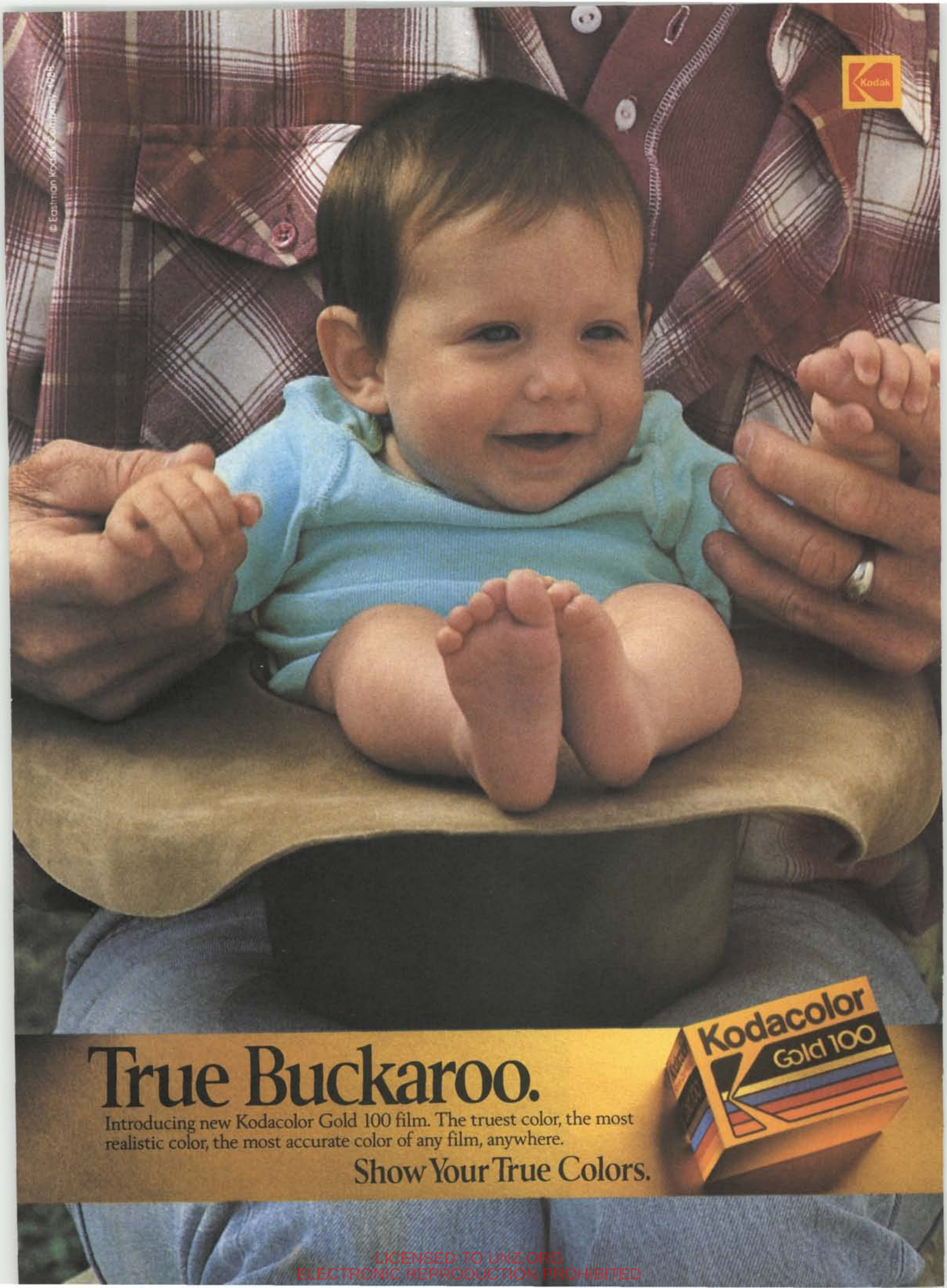
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